

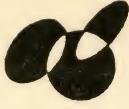
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disques

FOR SEPTEMBER 1931

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disques

VOL. II

SEPTEMBER, 1931

No. 7

ONE of the things we can pretty nearly always expect every musical season is an outpouring in the public prints of articles and letters vigorously criticizing the lack of enterprise on the part of those responsible for the contents of the season's programs. Satirical, hopeless, indignant, exasperated, caustic, despairing, but nearly always apposite and eminently justified, these articles and letters, written in all conceivable styles and moods, ranging from the gently remonstrative to the ferociously bellicose, yet seem to accomplish very little. One reaches that atrabilious conclusion two different ways, both equally good: by noting that the writers of these articles and letters should deem it necessary to re-phrase and republish them every year, and by glancing over the season's programs. It is thus rather difficult, under the circumstances, to entertain any fatuously optimistic dreams about the proximity of the time when all our symphonic organizations and operatic companies will concentrate on giving us new works with the care and frequency with which they now present the standard numbers. While it is true that the casual music lover, *i.e.*, the sort of person whose musical appetite is satisfied by several concerts and maybe an opera or so a season, can scarcely find adequate cause for complaint in the present situation,

those to whom the hearing of music is a rather pressing necessity and who in consequence attend concerts and opera regularly can't be blamed for their occasional indignant outbursts. Thoroughly familiar with the standard repertoire, they very naturally want to hear something else.



Every season the substance of the criticism is pretty much the same. Conductors, ignoring most of the significant music composed today and much unfamiliar music as well, continue their policy of playing over and over again only those works best calculated to appeal to the great mass of so-called music lovers. Soloists, disdaining the wealth of unhexed music for their particular instruments, play instead those pieces which long experience has demonstrated will infallibly produce the most thunderous applause. And opera impresarios, resolutely turning their backs upon anything even remotely approaching genuine novelty and salience, let us see and hear the standard repertoire *ad infinitum*. In all this appalling indifference, inertia, complacency and fear of the new and unusual, it is rightly claimed, there can be neither health nor profit nor progress. There can be only stagnation. The normal music lover, equipped with a tolerably good pair of

ears, needs new music to hear almost as badly as the normal book lover needs new books to read. ("New" is not necessarily to be taken to mean lateness of composition; anything previously unheard or unread is new.) The analogy, of course, is not altogether felicitous, because the average person can generally get more from a book at the first reading than he can get from a piece of music at the first hearing. Repetition, necessary for full appreciation in all the arts, is perhaps most essential in music.



It is unhappily true that the musical seasons in the large centres are largely characterized by the evils briefly indicated above. But it is hardly likely that these evils will be appreciably diminished by denouncing those responsible for them. For these evils are rooted so firmly in the box office and in the public's fear of anything new and unusual that, the world being what it is and always has been—*i.e.*, uncommonly reluctant to accept new ideas, no matter how plausible,—it would require an extraordinary amount of optimism to pretend that the situation reveals any visible indications of amelioration. Those works which cause the most box office excitement always have been and no doubt always will be played most often; nor is it particularly difficult to understand why. Now and then, of course, the rare combination of money and intelligence appears and lends its support to some laudable musical enterprise. But this combination, it is scarcely necessary to add, is not often encountered. Even in normal times the amount of the former is never too plentiful, and the latter, at all times and in all places, is never conspicuously abundant. And neither of them, for obvious reasons, is commonly very effective without the other.



Since there thus seems little hope for a complete reversal of policy on the part of the program-makers in the very near future, it behooves those to whom most of the standard repertoire is excessively familiar to find some other method of hearing the new music they want so badly to hear. Here, as Dr. Goldberg suggested in a recent issue of *Disques*, the phonograph companies can perform an extremely useful service. By making available good records of new music they benefit both us and the new music far more than a single actual performance could. Most good music needs to be heard a number of times before it can be fully understood. When, as now and then happens, some musical organization does permit us to hear a new work, we hear it only once. It may be years before such an opportunity again presents itself. Progress is necessarily slow and tedious. Put on records, though, it can quickly make itself known and understood, and the reception it obtains consequently depends upon the quality of the work. Considering all this, then, it scarcely seems too much to say that the phonograph's most promising chance to occupy a salient and commanding position in the musical world lies in the fact that it can play for us music we can't hear elsewhere. It rests largely with record collectors whether or not the phonograph is to achieve this importance. Many examples of unfamiliar music have already been recorded and made available. The amount of support these examples receive will in all probability be the leading factor in helping the companies to decide what works to record.

Rumors regarding the long-playing record and the recording by the Philadelphia Orchestra of the entire Beethoven Fifth Symphony on one 12-inch disc, announced last month in *Disques*, continue to circulate. Judging from the correspondence we have received relating to the subject, such a disc would be warmly welcomed. Apparently nothing has so fevered collectors since the announcement, some years back, of the Orthophonic Victrola. This, of course, is only natural, for if a satisfactory long-playing record actually does materialize, it will constitute the first major improvement in the record industry in several years, and the resultant benefits, musical, practical and financial, are obviously manifold. A recent visit to the RCA Victor Company was encouraging. Despite the depression and great heat, the enormous plant at Camden revealed extraordinary activity: factory, recording studios and office force seemed to be working at full capacity, and with far more diligence than is customary in mid-Summer. Executives, though they vouchsafed no definite information, gave interesting, if tantalizingly incomplete, hints. It is rash to make promises, but we hope to publish full details in the October issue of *Disques*.



NICOLAS SLONIMSKY, who contributes an article on Rimsky-Korsakov to this issue, has just returned from Paris, where he gave a series of concerts devoted mainly to recent American compositions. His article on Sergei Prokofiev in the June issue of *Disques* brought the following comment from the composer (translated from the Russian) :

I like your article, although I regret that you are not acquainted with my latest period, which I consider as being the most important. Besides, it represents a reconciliation of the divergences of previous periods, and it does not show an "absolute preponderance" of 4/4 time, for which you knocked me among other things. A few brief corrections: the incantation for *They Are Seven* is of Accadian and not Babylonian origin, i.e., more ancient; in the list of recordings should be added fragments from the *Chout* and the Suite from the *Oranges*, integrally recorded by Poulet.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word IMPORTED appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

Rimsky-Korsakov

By NICOLAS SLONIMSKY

Rimsky-Korsakov was dead twenty-three years last June. A composer's immortality is determined by lasting survival after death; the tastes and customs of posterior times often rub off the enamel, but, as Hans Andersen said, the pig's skin persists. Thus Moussorgsky survived fifty years of posterity, and his music persists, despite the changing fashion. It was in connection with Moussorgsky's revival that Rimsky-Korsakov suffered a posthumous assault: during his lifetime, his competence in matters musical was never called into question. He revised Moussorgsky's scores so as to make them palatable to his contemporaries—a service which cannot be appreciated now when even the revolutionaries of that remote day are like unto mumbling infants. However that may be, Rimsky-Korsakov had very bad publicity when authentic Moussorgsky was revealed, some three years ago. So much more timely would be an attempt to evaluate Rimsky-Korsakov's original works and establish his place in the world of modern complexities.

II

Rimsky-Korsakov had his moments of daring, and many modern devices can be traced to this academician, professor with a long, rectangular beard, director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music, educator and dean of musical scholars in the pre-war Russia. Thus, he was a pioneer of the 11/4 time, and the students used to scan the words, that is, the Russian equivalent of the words: RIMSKY-KORSAKOV IS ALTOGETHER MAD (11 syllables) in order to conceive this complex rhythm. In his great opera, *The Ballad of the City of Kitej*, he offers several instances of uneven divisions within the bars of 4/4 or 9/8 time, forming varied rhythmical units (e.g. 3/4 plus 3/8 in a bar of 9/8). It is more difficult to find harmonic innovations in Rimsky's scores. The impressionistic "throwing in" of notes which, by nature and by law, do not belong to a certain harmony was unthinkable for Rimsky-Korsakov.

Polytonality, atonality and dissonant systems of harmony appeared on the scene when Rimsky-Korsakov was happily dead. The only questionable note in all of Rimsky's music is the sustained E of the violin against a D major chord in the coda of *Sheherazade*.^{*} As to the sharp superposition of the chords of the diminished seventh and augmented triads of the *Golden Cockerel* (the second act of the opera, and the second movement of the Suite), there is no occasion to shout polytonality! for the superposed chord is resolved into the selfsame augmented triad. True, an augmented triad is not a definite concord: in this section of the *Golden Cockerel* Rimsky-Korsakov did write in whole-tone scales and augmented triads without a dominant. At times, the triads cross so harshly as to form decided discords, unjustified from a tonal point of view. The opera was written in 1907; it was Rimsky-Korsakov's last testament. The road inevitably led to further harmonic complica-

* An amusing anecdote is told in connection with this nefarious E. The great Russian contrapuntist Taneiev pointed out to Rimsky-Korsakov his objectionable use of passing chords against an upper pedal note. Rimsky replied that it is justified if used "only once." "But the example is dangerous," remarked Taneiev thoughtfully, "one mustn't break a law even once in a lifetime, most particularly an æsthetic law."

tions; Rimsky-Korsakov's famous pupil, Igor Stravinsky, in a few years progressed from the *Fire-Bird*, still well within Rimsky-Korsakov's precepts, to the crashing *Sacre du Printemps*. We must not forget, however, that Rimsky-Korsakov never deviated from the rigid laws of nineteenth century harmony, and reserved his harshest harmonic combinations for passing effects. The letter and the spirit of his work received a miniature reflection in his "Treatise of Harmony," written as a result of many years of teaching experience. The laws of harmony are therein presented as codified by usage—without a historical perspective apt to undermine a text-book. In the second part, and in small type, Rimsky-Korsakov gives license for what he has previously condemned; thus we learn that even consecutive fifths are permissible under certain conditions. And at the end, the student is advised to compose harmonic preludes, under the supervision of an experienced instructor, taking care not to over-indulge in harmonic acerbity.

III

It is often instructive to scan the avocations of a professional man in order to understand his weaknesses. Wasn't Scriabin's chief weakness revealed in his aspirations towards a mystical art which would appeal to all human senses, the olfactory sense not excluded? Didn't Arnold Bax give himself away in stating that his recent Symphony was divinely inspired? To judge by divinely inspired works, God must be a poor musician. Fortunately for Rimsky-Korsakov, no such delusions preoccupied his mind; the farthest excursion into regions unknowable was his theory of sympathetic tonalities and colors. He thought that the key of love is and of necessity must be E major (*c. f.* Levko's Aria in the *May Night*), that cities and towns must be colored in E flat major (he made a corresponding change in the order of geographical names in the scene of Boris Godunov and the Czarevich in Moussorgsky's opera; but the E flat major of the love scene with Marina was left unchanged much against Rimsky-Korsakov's better judgment). But these musical superstitions never hampered Rimsky-Korsakov's assured and scholarly mind. His professional rank may have been, after all, of great service to him: teaching his pupils, he found that no amount of vague philosophy could replace a perfect technique. In building his arbitrary system of harmonic taboos, he was nearer to musical truth than those accomplished musicians who, starting as revolutionaries, end by immolating the art of music at the shrine of a dogmatic God. Rimsky-Korsakov's music was not entirely godless—his *Ballad of the City of Kitej* is forbidden for performance by the Soviet Government—but even in this *Parsifal à la Russe*, Rimsky-Korsakov does not cease for a moment to be a musician. His extra-musical life was not as rich as that of his companions in the famous Group of Five: he was an officer of the Marine, but only as any young man in the mid-nineteenth century Russia would be, following the natural order of things, whereas César Cui reached the rank of a general, and was instructor to the late Czar Nicholas II in strategy and ballistics. Borodin was a professor of chemistry, Balakirev a man of wealth and social importance; only Moussorgsky, whose case is too complicated to pass over in a few words, was a man without avocation. His relationship with Rimsky-Korsakov is most interesting to examine; the opposition of an unschooled genius and a budding professor is too facile to be psychologically adequate; it may be that, after all, Rimsky was not the musical oppressor that he is often pictured. It may be that knowledge without genius is a building power at least equal to genius without knowledge.

The Group of Five rose to musical power under the nationalistic banner of a Greater Russia. Opposition to Western and, particularly, to the Italian School was the motive power behind the group, while an alliance with the musical Orient was offered as a compensation. The idea of a Eurasian Russia, a Russia without Europe, for a long time dominated Russian literature, Russian art and music. The abundance of Orientals in Russian operas of Rimsky-Korsakov must be understood in the light of the prevalent philosophy of his time. With this political drive towards the East came the curious orientalism in Russian music, chiefly expressed in the double-minor scale with two augmented seconds, and the major harmonic scale, cultivated quite especially by Rimsky-Korsakov. The most notorious example of this artificial orientalism is the *Song of the Hindu Guest* (now played all over the world whenever there is a need for exotic atmosphere) from the opera *Sadko*. The co-existence of an E flat and a B natural in the same passage gives trouble to many a radio-singer; Gigli, for one, invariably substitutes a B flat for the disturbing natural, thus doing away with the last drop of harmonic acid present in the song. The accompanying figure, with its characteristic raised fifth, resolving into a major sixth, is another device of Russian orientalism. Needless to add, the real untempered Orient has nothing in common with this Orient of musical Russia, just as Spain has nothing in common with Rimsky's *Capriccio Espagnol*.

IV

Rimsky-Korsakov, serving the ideal of a Russian national music, was naturally attracted by the vast treasure of Russian folk-lore, particularly the *bilini*, sagas of old Russia, with supernatural heroes walking across the world, going even under the seas, to tell of the wonders of great Russia. "There's Russian air, a smell of Russia," said Pushkin in the preface to *Russlan and Ludmilla*, the epic which served as a libretto for the first Russian opera by Glinka. And, despite the false East, there is a smell of Russia in the operas of Rimsky-Korsakov; from the first unaffectedly beautiful musical tale of *Snegurochka (Snow-Maiden)* to the last huge operatic constructions, not untouched by Wagner, such as the already-mentioned *Ballad of the City of Kitej*, Rimsky-Korsakov preserves an atmosphere of Russian phantasmagoria. Yet, even this loyal sculptor of heroic Russia was not without blemish in the eyes of the Czar's government; whereas the fairy tales about the Czar Dodon (from the *Golden Cockerel*) and Czar Saltan, both taken from the classical poems of Pushkin, were obligatory reading in all schools, the scenic representation of such Czars with prophetic thrusts at their simplicity and tyranny was not welcomed by the police of the *ancien régime*, and several spicy lines were cut out or changed to render the fairy tales less applicable to modern Czars. The rôle of Rimsky-Korsakov as director of the Conservatory of St. Petersburg was also revolutionary to a degree; at least, he remained with the students in their clash with city authorities during the first Russian Revolution of 1905. Academic rank and faith in musical culture Rimsky never sacrificed for a political aim. His portrait—intelligent eyes hidden behind a pince-nez, the graying, long, rectangular beard, the erect posture, the simple business suit, a perfect image of a benevolent professor—is still looking down from the wall of the concert hall at the Leningrad Conservatory, where students, still using his "Treatise of Harmony" as official text-book, talk atonality and polytonality.

It is a strange thing that Rimsky-Korsakov (and with him Borodin, Balakirev, Cui and Moussorgsky) was so little interested in instrumental music. The few pieces for the piano, left to us by the Mighty Five of Russia, are quite insignificant, and, with the exception of Balakirev's *Islamey*, quite forgotten. There is little or no chamber music from any of the five. The concertos for violin and orchestra and piano with orchestra are not among Rimsky-Korsakov's notable works. Rimsky-Korsakov gave all his ardor to the opera and song. Even his orchestral works occupy a secondary place in his creative work. He lived in the phrase and line of Russian poets, in the archaic turns of sagas of the people. If he was not an expressionist, a declamator of Moussorgsky's type—the sense of form would never allow him to dismember a musical composition for the sake of a half-spoken phrase—he adapted the sounds to the lines as congenially as it was possible without endangering the musical structure. He knew how to create an atmosphere of word-music; in his songs every allusion to the sea, the forest or the distant thunder was immediately and sensitively translated into tasteful rippling of piano passages. He was preëminently a poet of the sea (his young days as marine officer may have been his inspiration); marine and submarine scenes (as in *Sadko*) always lured him. For sea-music he found flowing figurations of the 'cellos—perhaps the most convincing waves ever pictured in music. In the Suite of *Sheherazade* he attains astonishing eloquence in the foundering of Sindbad's ship. In this work, Rimsky-Korsakov must have found a complete revelation of his inner self—the splendid métier, coruscating orchestration, plenitude of sound, the ultimate fury of the elements, and the epical recital of the solo violin—all this, wrapped in voluptuous Oriental harmonies, gives a sense of fullness, completeness and equilibrium that is not easily recreated. The programmatic grandeur, in all its obvious insolvency, here is avenged—but how dangerous this path is we can see in the example of Respighi, who was for several years Rimsky's pupil; from the grandeur of *Sheherazade* to the grandiloquence of the *Fountains of Rome* is a distance far greater than that between two works of unequal value written in absolute forms of absolute music. Music with a program rarely endures; it takes an expert hand to draw a panorama in tones less obvious than Strauss's *Alpine Symphony* or Beethoven's *Pastorale*.

V

What is the value of Rimsky-Korsakov's music nearly a quarter century after his death? As a living influence on works of living composers he is dead and gone. His false orientalism can survive only on American radio-stations. His songs are cherished only in Russia, and are proffered, outside of Russia, by nostalgic refugees. His operas are rarely heard and still more rarely studied. But his orchestral works have conquered the world. True, the brilliance of his orchestral palette has been transcended by Stravinsky and equalled by Respighi. Conductors are freely doubling tripling, or even quadrupling his instrumentation (as Stokowski does, or at least did, in the colloquium of the brass instruments in the second movement of *Sheherazade*.) What is it then that makes it impossible to imagine an orchestral year without *Sheherazade* or the Suite from the *Golden Cockerel* or *Czar Saltan*? Rimsky-Korsakov has the advantage of a sober-minded professor over those among the moderns who conjure up all the elements of earth and heaven for crashing effects; he doses out his splashes of color so that when a cymbal player flourishes his *piatti* in the air, we really see golden suns and hear golden thunder which we

would not have seen had we had this cymbal insensibilizing our eardrums for some time. This sounds elementary; do not the moderns know their orchestration? Apparently not, for this perfect equilibrium of orchestral masses is signally lacking on most modern scores. We do not want to study Rimsky-Korsakov's volume on Orchestration, with a supplementary volume of chosen samples from his own works: we think his art is out of date. We are deceived; what there is of the professor in his scores is eminently useful. We justly refute his aesthetic credo and keep away from the exotic forests of his harmonies. But his splendid consistency we cannot ignore; and this consistency may teach modern know-it-alls what they are yet to acquire in their own works.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV RECORDS

La Grande Pâque Russe—Overture. Four sides. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Two 12-inch discs (V-7018 and V-7019). \$2 each. Miniature Score: *Eulenburg No. 692*.

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(See also *Encyclopedia of the World's Best Recorded Music*.)

The British Renascence

By LAURENCE POWELL

The worst thing that ever happened to British music was the arrival in Britain of Handel, who for over forty years poured out a stream of works that obsessed the islanders, leaving them with a complex that precluded nearly all musical progress for a century and a half. The sturdiness of this complex can be sensed in several quarters. Samuel Butler, for instance, in his "Way of All Flesh," actually gives one to understand that music is worthless unless composed after the Handel recipe! Then again, take William Byrd: how are we to explain the unbelievable neglect of his great works unless it be that the Britishers, finding their musical polaris in the stupendous Saxon, were led to total forgetfulness of their own "Father of Musicke"? It was not only Byrd's music that was left mouldering in the dungeons of various libraries, castles and Manor houses, but also that of the other Elizabethans, Orlando Gibbons, John Bull, Giles Farnaby and many another master of the time when England was, musically, at least comparable to any country in Europe. It is not to be supposed that the contemporary political disturbance known as the Reformation had anything to do with this neglect. Had these composers all clung to the Catholic faith and written exclusively for that ritual, we might assume that their music was discarded, as being useless to the Church of England. But on the contrary, all wrote for the new Service music which the English choirs came to ignore in favor of that pile of worthless oratorios, cantatas and anthems perpetrated by a series of composers inflamed with the Handel bug. This bug enjoyed a virulent existence until Mendelssohn came along with *Elijah*, which the English deemed to be a worthy companion to *Messiah*. They adored Mendelssohn because he had, like themselves, the Handel bug—but in a new culture.

From that time on, the disease took on a new symptom—Victorianism—which, if anything, was worse than the original and drew from Schumann the epithet: "English composer, no composer." Haydn had nearly infected the island with *The Creation*, but Haydn was a Catholic and therefore powerless to affect Handelitis: it needed Mendelssohn's watery Protestantism to make any change.

The next foreigner to alter things—and he, I think, did really oust Handelitis—was Brahms, for under his influence men like Parry and Stanford wrote music of a different hue. It can be said that they were the advance guard of a new day foreshadowing the second Spring, the distinct Renascence that was to begin about 1900 under the ægis of Elgar and Bantock.

II

Elgar grew up under the eves of Worcester Cathedral which, like all other English Cathedrals, was a hotbed of Handelitis, and in his early days he seemed to be going the "Way of all [British Musical] Flesh," but with the *Enigma Variations* and the *Dream of Gerontius*, he proved that he was of a different kidney. Many may think that the British accepted the latter work so wholeheartedly because, another oratorio, it was the latest in Handelism. Absolutely not. To begin with, the British coldly rejected this masterpiece at its Birmingham première under Richter in 1900. It was something totally different: and for another thing it was Catholic,

being Cardinal Newman's poetic presentation of Catholic dogma, clothed in a modern musical setting that owed nothing to any of the British musical gods. Not until Strauss, recognizing the genius of the work, gave it at a Lower Rhine Festival at Düsseldorf in May, 1902, were the British disposed to think anything at all of it. Nowadays *Gerontius* is given in England nearly as often as the *Messiah* or *Elijah*.

So staggering a fact is it that England, after a lapse of at least two centuries, has produced again a front-rank composer, that many cannot yet believe it, and, in fact, stop up their ears and will not believe it. Take, for instance, this from Carl van Vechten, which he writes in a small book of essays, "Music after the Great War," published in 1915 [sic]: "I take less pleasure in hearing a piece by Sir Edward Elgar than I do in a mediocre performance of *Le Prophète*, and I assure you that Meyerbeer is not my favorite composer. A meaner skill than Sir Edward's, perhaps, lies in Irving Berlin's fingers, but a greater genius." So a composer's skill lies in his fingers! Well, if Van Vechten has not already given himself away by preferring Berlin to Elgar, he certainly shows that he does not understand Elgar when he goes on to say: "The *Cockaigne* Overture is more to my taste, although I think it no great achievement." Not many musicians think this piece a great achievement, and hardly any find it to their taste, because it is not the real Elgar. Such remarks as those of Van Vechten have been paralleled in the case of other composers: they remind one of Hugo Wolf's dictum about Brahms' *Academic Festival* Overture, to wit, that he understood that Brahms had orchestrated Czerny's *Hundred and One* exercises. Time will prove Van Vechten as out in his remarks as it has done Wolf in his.

Elgar may have been the first to make himself felt in the Renascence, but it was Bantock who was its first champion and who had the necessary revolutionary spirit to crystallize things into a movement. His is the type that attracts followers, while Elgar is the solitary, living for art's sake. The reason why Bantock has been neglected as a composer in this country is that he has made his most significant contributions to music in two fields that are not favored here—the Art Song and the A Cappella Choir. His songs are the equal of anything in this field from the pen of Strauss, and his great song cycles, *Sappho*, *The Ghazals of Hafiz*, his *Thirty Songs from the East* and the more recent *Browning Lyrics*, share the fate of the whole output of Hugo Wolf in awaiting the advent of some singer not too overpowered by operatic arias and sentimental parlor stuff to do them justice. In his choral compositions, Bantock is entirely original, having practically invented a new medium, namely choral orchestration. He actually scores for unaccompanied voices in some twenty parts, and in his two a cappella symphonies, *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Vanity of Vanities*, there are whole stretches where no words are used and the voices virtually become instruments painting a picture of the desert or discoursing an oriental dance: the voices do not hum, à la sentimental part-song, but sing various rhythmic syllables. Some of this modern choral writing makes Kodály, Krenek and Honegger look like experimenters, and it is vastly more vocal in spite of the fact that choral directors in this country, used to the hymn-tune droning inaugurated by Stephen Foster, pronounce it as unsingable. The phonograph has neglected Bantock because massive choral music does not yet record as well as it might, and then, too, the joy of choral music is rather in the singing of it than in the listening to it. However, in these days of dirge for the decease of the amateur pianist, violinist and 'cellist there

are some signs of a choral awakening in this country, and it may be that Bantock will come into his own here as he did with the industrial choirs of England. That which distinguishes Bantock as the protagonist of the British Renascence is his work for the people, his stirring up of the folk to a consciousness of modern music. He was behind the Competition Festival movement which inaugurated contests in every branch of music where no prize was offered and yet where thirteen thousand competitors would spend two weeks in Bantock's own city, Birmingham, and discourse nothing but the best in music. Another unselfish activity was his part, along with Sir Richard Terry, Dr. Edmund Fellowes and Mr. H. B. Collins, in recovering the Elizabethan past and restoring it to his countrymen and to the world.

III

The war drew a very distinct dividing line across the Renascence, and it looked for a time as though post-war works were leading to something very significant, but Sir Thomas Beecham has been proved more or less correct in his "British music is like a promissory note." Holst's *The Planets* seemed eight years ago to be a very much bigger thing than it does now: re-heard now, it seems positively boring and eternally long-winded in its childish construction. A few new chords and a gigantic orchestra, including bass oboe and bass flute, cannot cover the banality of a few very John Bullish tunes that belong to 'ampstead 'eath rather than to the larger domain of the Planets. Many another prophetic work of 1920-1925 has fizzled out, while the pre-war vintage of Delius has asserted its delicate bouquet: it was not till men were tired of the cacophonous extravagances of the last hectic decade that they turned with relief to the gentle and soothing flavor of Delius. As his name would imply, he is not of British stock, but, born and bred in Yorkshire, his music has a certain characteristic modality. He made a god of beauty at a time when others were worshipping the bizarre, and it is only the neo-classic who is deaf to his poetry. Many of his smaller orchestral works and some of his chamber music can be very adequately heard on discs.

One thing the war did was to force England to rely to such an extent on her own musical resources that a certain amount of jingoism entered in, so that no foreigner could get a place in a British orchestra, and even the greatest foreign virtuosi were anathema. A work was lauded merely for being British, but I doubt whether it ever reached the stage where one's patriotism was questioned for unfavorable criticism of a British work, as it undoubtedly is here if one dares to cast aspersions on MacDowell!

But out of post-war jingoism grew a much more baneful influence—Nationalism and the Vaughan-Williams folk-song cult flourished at the expense of that very much broader Elgar-Bantock-Delius movement, though the works of these latter were strangely enough played more than ever before. Prompted by the desire for a patent idiom, musicians seized upon the treasure of folk-song collected from the counties by Cecil Sharp and from the Hebrides by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser, and, making a fetish of these tunes, began, à la Russian, making symphonies and ballad operas out of them, thus narrowing down their appeal to their "ain folk" exclusively; for whereas Russian folk music seems to have an exotic appeal to the world at large, the poetry of English music is obscured by the world-concept of the British as a nation of

phlegmatic industrialists. And whereas the Russians were naïve in their presentation of folk material, the British apply to it an academicism derived from Germany, which serves to confuse rather than to beautify. Holst, who used to delight in exotic fantasy in such works as the one-act opera *Savitri* and the *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, cuts a sorry figure in his ballad folk-opera *The Boar's Head*, though his 1925 *Choral Symphony* shows evidence of the gestation of a new idiom. But, if you want to realize how dull British national music can be, play the records of Vaughan-Williams' *The Lark Ascending*! In his symphonies, there is some fine texture but generally obscured by too much London fog. But bigger than either Williams or Holst is Bax, who would be well advised to broaden his outlook by a visit to this country, as he seems to be cutting off his right hand—synonym for his public abroad—by indulging in a too narrow and exclusive Kelticism. Elgar, despite many a British opinion, is not a Nationalist, though his music is as British as that of Sibelius is Finnish: he prefers to write his own music entirely, without relying on folk-songs for thematic material; he writes the King's English without resorting to county dialects understood only by peasants. This is true in part, of course, of Bax, and wholly true of John Ireland, the excellence of whose limited output places him in the very forefront of present-day music. He is, without question, the only serious British writer of piano music, and shares the chamber-music honors with Bax. I would like to add that Ireland's fine 'Cello Sonata may be studied from phonograph records and the set is heartily recommended to all interested in modern music.

SOME RECORDED MODERN ENGLISH MUSIC

GRANVILLE BANTOCK

The Pilgrim's Progress: Selections. Two sides. National Choir and B. B. C. Wireless Symphony Orchestra conducted by Stanford Robinson. One 12-inch disc (C-9894). \$2.

ARNOLD BAX

Sonata for Two Pianos. Five sides and *Hardanger* (with acknowledgments to Grieg). One side. Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson (Two Pianos). Three 12-inch discs (G-156 to G-158). \$2 each.

Quartet in G Major. Six sides. Marie Wilson Quartet. Three 12-inch discs (G-153 to G-155). \$2 each.

Moy Mell—The Happy Plain. Two sides. Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson (Two Pianos). One 12-inch disc (G-102). \$2.

Phantasy Sonata for Viola and Harp. Six sides. Raymond Jeremy (Viola) and Marie Korchiusko (Harp). Three 12-inch discs (G-118 to G-120). \$2 each.

Oboe Quintet. Four sides. Leon Goossens (Oboe) and International String Quartet. Two 12-inch discs (G-76 and G-77). \$2 each.

Tintagel. Three sides and *Mediterranean*. One side. New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugène Goossens. Two 12-inch discs (V-9787 and V-9788). \$1.50 each.

FREDERICK DELIUS

(See Disques for August, 1930, page 208, for list of Delius recordings.)

EDWARD ELGAR

(See Disques for April, 1931, page 58, for list of Elgar recordings.)

IV

The influence of Stravinsky is certainly not absent and may be sensed in such composers as Bliss, Goossens and that clever amateur, Lord Berners. Bliss's *Color Symphony* was heard in this country in 1923 and 1924 and his new *Symphony, Morning Heroes*, has been well received in England. Younger men, like Walton and Lambert, show great promise, but, taking it all round, can anything more be said of the whole English post-war output? And could anything more be said for the recent Teutonic efforts? I think that British activity compares very favorably with German exertion, only the latter is better known because, from the time of Handel and Bach, we have formed the habit of glueing our eyes on Central Europe with a sense of expectation of great things to come. The world knows a great deal about German music, but does Germany know anything more than precious little about world music? Let us realize that Germany, after having mothered a large family, is approaching senility; how unreasonable to expect her to be eternally fecund in musical creation! Let us look toward England, not as to the center of things, but as to some invalid lately rejuvenated. Three outstanding facts must be kept in mind with regard to her: first, in 1600 she was musically preëminent; second, that despite the clutches of industrialism, she has been a worthy contributor to all the sister arts; and third, that she has at last, believe it or not, completely overthrown that tyrant, George Frederick Handel.

EDWARD GERMAN

Welsh Rhapsody. Four sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Landon Ronald. Two 12-inch discs (V-D1939 and V-D1940). \$2 each.

EUGÈNE GOOSENSES

Judith: Ballet Music. Two sides. New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugène Goossens. One 12-inch disc (V-9740). \$1.50.

GUSTAVE HOLST

The Planets. Fourteen sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Gustave Holst. Seven 12-inch discs (C-67394D to C-67400D) in album. Columbia Set No. 83. \$10.50.

JOHN IRELAND

Sonata for 'Cello and Piano. John Ireland (Piano) and Antoni Sala ('Cello). Seven sides and *April.* One side. John Ireland (Piano). Four 12-inch discs (C-L2314 to C-L2317) in album. \$8.

CONSTANT LAMBERT

The Rio Grande: For Chorus, Orchestra and Solo Pianoforte. Four sides. St. Michael's Singers, Hallé Orchestra and Hamilton Harty (Piano) conducted by Constant Lambert. Two 12-inch discs (C-L2373 and C-L2374). \$2 each.

PETER WARLOCK

Serenade for Strings. Two sides. John Barbirolli and the N. G. S. Chamber Orchestra. One 12-inch disc (G-75). \$2.

Capriol: Suite. Two sides. London Chamber Orchestra conducted by Anthony Bernard. One 12-inch disc (D-K576). \$1.50.

RALPH VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS

The Lark Ascending. Three sides and *The Leprechaun's Dance.* (Stanford) One side. Isolde Menges (Violin) with Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Two 12-inch discs (V-C1622 and V-C1623). \$1.75 each.

The Columbia History of Music: Vol. II*

*From the Beginning of the Opera and Oratorio to the Death
of Bach and Handel*

By RICHARD J. MAGRUDER

When it was rumored some months ago that the Columbia Graphophone Company and the Oxford University Press were joining forces in the preparation of a history of music which would be illustrated by phonograph records, interest in the enterprise ran high. The names of those engaged in the undertaking, for one thing, commanded respect and were well-calculated to inspire confidence and the highest hopes. A history of music prepared by Percy A. Scholes with the assistance of such recognized authorities as Arnold Dolmetsch, Dr. E. H. Fellowes, Kennedy Scott and others, it was felt, would be almost certain to be both authoritative and eminently useful. And the names of the artists who were engaged to record the musical examples chosen to illustrate the history were similarly full of promise.

Moreover, the *Columbia History of Music by Ear and Eye*, as it was called, seemed destined to fill an obvious need. That the most had not been made of the educational possibilities latent in the phonograph was clearly recognized. Here was a machine on which could be reproduced records of almost any type of music, and yet no historian, setting out to narrate the history of music, had made more than cursory use of it. The Columbia history accordingly represented something entirely new. It represented the first attempt on the part of any of the phonograph companies to provide a detailed and comprehensive outline of music. Plenty of records containing music of practically all important periods are available, but until the Columbia history appeared no one had attempted to systematize this vast amount of material; no one had attempted to arrange a workable and intelligent guide so that the music lover could obtain a clear idea of the various steps by which music has developed through the ages. A history arranged in convenient, attractive and readily accessible form with musical examples which could be heard and studied as often as one wished was plainly needed. The idea itself was surely not new, but no one had attempted to carry it out.

An Elizabethan madrigal, a Bach Brandenburg Concerto, a Strauss tone poem—works as widely apart, in both spirit and time of composition, as these appear nearly every month on the various supplements. The well-informed music lover and musician, of course, had no difficulty in assimilating such diverse releases, but to the music lover ignorant of technical and historical details they represented only one thing: music. The great differences that lie between them were not clearly

*THE COLUMBIA HISTORY OF MUSIC BY EAR AND EYE: *Vol. II.* By Percy A. Scholes, with the collaboration of Kennedy Scott, Doris Owens (Contralto), Frederic Jackson (Harpsichord), Bach Cantata Club (London), Bratza (Violin), Rudolph Dolmetsch (Harpsichord), Arnold Dolmetsch (Clavichord), Leon Goossens (Oboe), and Robert Murchie (Flute). Eight 10-inch discs (C-DB500 to C-DB507) in album with booklet. London: *Oxford University Press and Columbia Graphophone Company, Ltd.* \$9.

understood; the importance and significance of each were only vaguely comprehended. The music lover anxious to improve his knowledge of the subject through records had thus been left to his own devices, and unless he had more than the ordinary amount of leisure at his disposal, a good deal of the content and quality of music, whether heard from records or in concert, was pretty certain to escape him. To trace, logically and in proper order, the various steps by which music has developed, with apposite musical examples from the various periods, to provide a sound foundation on which the music lover could subsequently build—such, in brief, was the purpose of the Columbia history.

The first volume, issued slightly over a year ago, was immediately successful. It was obvious that the thing was in competent hands, that the problem had been approached and solved in a highly intelligent and ingenious manner. Not only was the general public—for whom, of course, the history was primarily designed—impressed with its usefulness; libraries and educational institutions, too, were quick to recognize its value, and accordingly it is now widely used in those enlightened schools and colleges* which employ the phonograph in their musical courses. In the admirable booklet that accompanied the album, Mr. Scholes wrote: "To give understanding, and thus to awaken sympathy is . . . the true aim of any history of painting, literature, or music." That aim is an enormously difficult one, and traces of it are seldom found in most histories, but somehow it was accomplished with resounding success in Vol. I of the Columbia history. Before considering Vol. II, in which the author's adherence to the same laudable aim is again pleasantly visible, it would be well to review briefly the contents of Vol. I.†

II

Consisting of an album of eight 10-inch records and an illustrated booklet of some forty-eight pages, Vol. I essayed to cover the outstanding musical developments up to the opening of the seventeenth century, with special emphasis laid upon church choral music, instrumental music, solo song and secular choral music such as the madrigal in its various forms. Musical examples from significant English, Flemish, and Italian composers of the period were recorded under the direction of Sir Richard Terry, Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch and Dr. E. H. Fellowes. Palestrina, Byrd, Bull, Farnaby, Norcome, Weekles, Dowland, Pilkington, Morley, Gibbons and Farmer were the composers represented. Mr. Scholes' booklet described, commented upon and provided the proper historical background to each of the records, and in a manner notable for its clarity and charm.

The whole thing was carried out superlatively well. A vast amount of relevant information, difficult to obtain elsewhere, was miraculously compressed into astonishingly small space, and for once the early music was made clear and plausible to the uninitiated. The records themselves were admirably chosen and produced, and quite apart from their place in the history they would have aroused great interest if they had been released separately on the various monthly lists. Vol. I,

* Where the history is used in class, it is manifest that every student should be provided with the printed book. Additional copies for such use are available through the Oxford University Press.

† Vol. I was reviewed in detail on page 209 of the August, 1930, issue of *Disques*.

in fine, was of such high excellence that Vol. II, illustrating the beginnings of the more modern outlook, was eagerly awaited.

It has just been issued, and only a glance at its contents is sufficient to assure those familiar with Vol. I that the same painstaking care has again been employed. In general plan Vol. II follows that used in Vol. I, but for the majority of people it will probably be even more interesting than the previous album, since the music it deals with is more closely related to that which we are accustomed to hearing in our modern concert halls. Monteverdi, Purcell, Corelli, Handel and Bach are the composers whose works are considered representative of the period and hence are dealt with in the booklet.

Mr. Scholes sketches briefly but vividly the salient changes that came over music in 1600, when opera and oratorio first made their appearance. He then proceeds to illustrate these changes by a consideration of the eight records that are included in the album. The first record gives a recitative and air, *May Sweet Oblivion Lull Thee*, from Monteverdi's opera, *The Coronation of Poppea* (1642), sung by Doris Owens (contralto) with harpsichord accompaniment by Frederic Jackson. An example of church music, Purcell's *Rejoice in the Lord Away*, commonly called the *Bell Anthem*, is sung by a choir with harpsichord and string accompaniment provided by the Bach Cantata Club directed by Kennedy Scott.

The Finale, *La Folia*, from Corelli's Violin Sonata No. 12, is played by Bratza (violin) and Frederic Jackson (harpsichord), illustrating late seventeenth century music for violin. Music for harpsichord of the same period is exhibited in Purcell's Harpsichord Suite No. 1, played by Rudolph Dolmetsch. The Allemande and Courante from Handel's Harpsichord Suite No. 8, played by the same artist, follows.

An example of Handel's operatic music, *Like As the Love-Lorn Turtle from Atalanta*, is sung by Doris Owens, with string and harpsichord accompaniment. Another aspect of Handel's work is furnished by the Nightingale Chorus from the oratorio *Solomon*.

Coming to Bach, the history gives us a recording of the first movement from the Concerto in E Major for violin and string orchestra. This is played by Bratza with the Bach Cantata Club strings and harpsichord supplying the accompaniment. Arnold Dolmetsch, playing the clavichord, renders two preludes and fugues, Nos. 1 and 21, of the famous set of forty-eight. The Overture to Bach's Church Cantata No. 156, played by Leon Goossens (oboe) and strings, gives us one of Bach's loveliest melodies—one which he himself must have been especially fond of, for he used it in several other compositions. Two chorales, *Vater unser* and *Herzlich thut*, sung unaccompanied by the Bach Cantata Club, and Bach's setting of *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*, from the Church Cantata No. 147, sung by a choir with orchestral accompaniment, illustrate Bach's choral music. The volume concludes with the Rondeau and Badinerie from the Suite in B Minor, played by Robert Murchie (flute) and strings.

It would be superfluous to discuss these records in any detail here, since Mr. Scholes has done that so admirably in his booklet. It is enough to say that all of the discs are carefully recorded and satisfactorily interpreted. Some of them,

containing music not recorded elsewhere, will be highly prized. Mr. Scholes' booklet, running to fifty-two pages with a dozen illustrations, provides a scholarly and suggestive commentary, and in remarkably brief space he manages to make clear and vivid the outstanding characteristics of the period with which Vol. II is concerned.

III

The history, it is scarcely necessary to say, should properly be used in conjunction with other records. Studying Mr. Scholes' booklet and listening to his records, the student should in addition investigate the various catalogues and obtain further discs relating to the period. Mr. Scholes' history provides a splendid foundation, and with the aid of his numerous suggestions anyone seriously interested in the subject—providing, of course, that he is not unduly alarmed by the prospect of a little hard work—should be able to obtain a broader and far more effective idea of this music than he could gain from reading a dozen of the usual histories and outlines. And for the music lover anxious to obtain a clear idea of musical evolution the history should prove invaluable.

The principal advantage of this series, which is planned to include six volumes in all, is that it makes the study of music a live and engrossing and vastly entertaining enterprise. It does not profess to make the subject easy, nor does it guarantee any quick results, but it does provide an excellent plan and method for the student bewildered by the formidable difficulties that seem to surround most histories of music. Mr. Scholes' path is not altogether easy, but it is a safe and rewarding one, and so following it cannot be too heartily recommended. Subsequent volumes will deal with sonatas and symphonies to about 1800, music as romance and national expression (Weber, Chopin, Dvorák, Grieg, etc.), music as drama (Wagner, etc.), and twentieth century music (Debussy, Strawinsky, etc.), bringing the account up to the present day.



Apollo and Dionysus

By ISAAC GOLDBERG

Music, as M. Rolland insists, is the heroine of his story,* and his chief purpose is that of reinstating the greatest poet of modern Europe in "the fellowship of musicians." In these four monographs, however, there is another heroine: Bettina von Arnim. There is a hero: the Apollonian Goethe. There is an *homme fatal*: Beethoven. And a villain: Fate. It is in a Goethean spirit that the Frenchman approaches his task, little concerned with the journey's end: "It is the road which interests me, if only it lie in the right direction." For it is from Goethe that, since Rolland was thirty years old, he has sought counsel every day of his life. "Goethe has never sent me away thirsty . . . His were no abstract ideas . . . he poured out a stream of lively and novel experiences, nature's spring, in which my youth was renewed."

Related to the main theme, nevertheless, and frequently heard distinctly above it, are a number of subsidiary motifs. The paths of Beethoven and Goethe crossed but once, in the climactic year of 1812. For a moment they met at Teplitz. Goethe had been the first to call, and on the same day wrote to his wife: "Never before have I met an artist of more powerful concentration, more energy or deeper sincerity." This was on Sunday, July 19. The next day Apollo and Dionysus went for a walk together, Goethe bowing his way through emperors, empresses, archdukes and the rest of the glittering hierarchy, while Beethoven plowed stiffly along, too innerly aristocratic to notice the aristocrats. On the evening of the 21st, Goethe called again. Two days later he was once more the guest of Beethoven, who played for him. On the 27th, Beethoven proceeded to Karlsbad, according to doctor's orders. "Goethe," writes Rolland, "was only there from the 8th to the 11th of September. Did they meet? We do not know. On the 12th Beethoven left Karlsbad again for Teplitz, to which Goethe did not return. It was the end. During their whole life the two men were never to meet again."

II

There is a mystery here. Why the Goethean silence that rose between them after this first attraction? Bettina had been Beethoven's ardent advocate at Goethe's court. In the Summer of 1811 Goethe had broken off with her. The moment of his meeting with Beethoven could not have been less auspicious, yet the poet had plainly taken the initiative. It could not, then, have been the reaction from Bettina alone. There was Zelter, the musician upon whom Goethe leaned for many of his opinions; Zelter afterwards proved very helpful to the composer, but his musical sympathies lay in a different direction. In all Goethe's writings, difficult as it is to believe, there appears but a *single* reference to Beethoven; it is not even a complete sentence, and mentions the service held in Prague, in 1828, on the occasion of the master's death.

The answer lies in the fundamental opposition between the temperaments of the two geniuses. Goethe was order, health, design. The composer had lectured him

* GOETHE AND BEETHOVEN. By Romain Rolland. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$5.

upon his overfondness for rank, the sentimentality of his musical interpretation, his addiction to the formalities of etiquette. Beethoven was turbulence, abandon, passion. There was that in him which Goethe feared or could not fully understand. The great poet, as Rolland points out, was an artist only in his art; "his mental experience was a perpetual conquest, his life among men a constant flight." Goethe, then, sought escape from Beethoven. In music he disliked the grand scale and the morbidly romantic. He avoided depression of the spirit. His ear could not endure what to him were the splitting sonorities of the new school. Handel, Mozart, Bach—these he appreciated. In his music he desired "the joy of living, moral confidence, whole-hearted energy, and, above all, the impulse of reason." Thus Rolland. And Goethe himself: "I need lively and energetic music to grip and uplift me. Napoleon, who was a tyrant, needed softness in music. I, for the very reason that I am not a tyrant, love lively, gay, merry music. Man aspires to be what he is not."

We suddenly become aware of a duality in Goethe. He avoids Beethoven, even fears him, because Beethoven is that aspect of the Goethean self which Goethe was, but desired not to be. Beethoven was the Goethe that Goethe was bent on suppressing, conquering. It is an exciting thesis, and one of which Rolland, perhaps, with exemplary self-denial, makes too little. The discussion of Goethe as a musician is of special interest to both musical *literati* and literary musicians. Rolland here becomes frankly the poet's champion, as well he might be, on the basis of the evidence that he compiles. He even shows that it would have been easy for Goethe and Beethoven to have agreed, in theory and on the intellectual plane, as to the essence of music. It was physiology—the inability of Goethe's ear to accommodate the new loudness—that parted them.

Although Rolland writes with a frank prejudice in favor of intuition—"Bettina listened, just as Beethoven spoke, in a *raptus*, and that is why she perceived what ponderous intellectuals, who know nothing of the lightning which illumines the soul, are unable to grasp"—his essays are the result of much intense labor and much sifting of data. "Goethe and Beethoven" deserves to stand beside "Beethoven the Creator" for its fruitful commingling of poetic vision and stern critical discipline.





ORCHESTRA

MOZART

V-7394

to

V-7396

SYMPHONY NO. 40 *in G Minor.* (K. 550) Six sides. Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock. Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-109. \$6.50.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 27.

One of the major mysteries of recorded music is that none of the domestic companies has yet issued a reasonably satisfactory version of Mozart's Symphony in G Minor, ranked with the *Jupiter* and E Flat as his greatest. The recorders have surely not been niggardly with Mozart's works, and the catalogues even boast of some of the lesser known symphonies which are seldom if ever heard in concert, but for some reason or other the G Minor has been approached, when at all, very cautiously. The local Columbia Company, indeed, has yet to issue the work, though English Columbia has a beautiful version conducted by Bruno Walter available. Last Fall Brunswick issued Richard Strauss' Polydor set. While there are some who find much to admire in Strauss' reading, it cannot fairly be denied that the recording is decidedly third-rate, far below the present-day standards. Victor released some years ago, without much publicity, an early electrical set by Malcolm Sargent and the Covent Garden Orchestra, but it was neither adequately recorded nor satisfactorily played. There is thus plenty of room in the catalogues for this set of Frederick Stock's.

The Symphony, written during one of Mozart's unhappiest periods, was composed in the astonishingly short space of ten days. Felix Borowski, the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, points out that "of all the forty-nine symphonies only two are written in minor keys, and both are in G Minor." In a footnote, Mr. Borowski adds that both are "permeated by a certain passionate melancholy, which is also a marked characteristic of other works of Mozart's in G Minor—the magnificent quintet for strings, and the piano quartet." When Mozart composed the Symphony, he scored it for one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns and strings. Later, rearranging the oboe parts, he added clarinets; but this second version—called *Nachschrift*—was for some years unknown to the world at large. When the Symphony was performed, the first version was always used. Brahms, who was a diligent collector of autograph manuscripts of his favorite composers, managed to get hold of the original copy of the *Nachschrift*, but refused, for reasons still a mystery, to allow a copy to be made so that the revised edition could be published. But Theodore Thomas had also come into possession of a copy of the *Nachschrift*, and he used it for many years before other conductors were able to do so. The second version, now used at almost all concerts, is employed in this recording.

It is, of course, always a pleasure to listen to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, for it is technically a highly proficient organization, and it generally achieves signally successful results in its recording work. Here, however, praise must be given only sparingly. Both Stock and the recorders, reversing the methods they

employed in recording Tschaikowsky's Fifth Symphony, seem to be striving for brilliancy above all else, and inevitably much of the beauty and fragrance of the G Minor is sacrificed. Those who are familiar with the grace, subtlety and beautiful proportions of Toscanini's reading of the *Haffner* Symphony will miss these qualities in Stock's rather heavily buoyant interpretation. The first and second movements suffer most; the sturdy Menuetto and the energetic Allegro assai can better stand this sort of treatment. The recording is notable for its fine clarity and balance, which permit the individual instruments to be easily distinguishable, but the string tone is none too smooth; and the tone of the whole orchestra is a bit too hard and brilliant. Perhaps that is due to the powerful recording. This is the best of the domestic G Minors, but the need for an altogether satisfactory recording of the Symphony still remains unfulfilled.



J. C. BACH	SINFONIA IN B FLAT MAJOR. (J. C. Bach) Three sides and
J. S. BACH	
V-D1988 and V-D1989	AIR (<i>Suite for Orchestra</i>). (J. S. Bach-arr. Mahler) One side. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.
IMPORTED	

Johann Christian Bach, eleventh son of Johann Sebastian, was fourteen years old when his father died in 1750. After studying composition and clavier playing in Berlin, he went to Italy, becoming, in 1754, a pupil of Padre Martini at Bologna. From 1760 to 1762 he was organist of the Milan Cathedral; during this period he was writing operas as well as church music. From 1762 until his death in 1782 he lived in London, where he was appointed music-master to the Queen and the Royal Family. Because of his residence in Italy and England and also because of certain Italian qualities in his music, he is sometimes called the "Milanese" or "English" Bach.

Composed about 1770, the Sinfonia in B Flat Major was later employed by Bach as the Overture to his opera *Lucio Silla*. Its form—a slow movement between two lively ones—resembles the Italian overture. Combining Mozart's grace and elegance with Haydn's robust and hearty expansiveness, the Sinfonia is immensely enjoyable and well deserves a fine recording. The version given here is apparently Dr. Fritz Stein's, for it is the one Mengelberg used in his concerts in this country. The orchestra consists of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns in pairs, and strings. The first movement is expressive and charming; the grave Andante, with its lovely melody for the oboes and strings, makes an effective contrast; and the Finale is boisterous.

Mengelberg has already recorded the first two movements of the Sinfonia for Columbia. The Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra played in that version. Released sometime ago, the disc is not so smoothly recorded as the above set; moreover, the Philharmonic-Symphony strings, as revealed in this recording, are far superior to the Concertgebouw's. All three movements, of course, are included here. On the reverse side is Mahler's version of the familiar *Air* by J. S. Bach, beautifully played and recorded. This delightful pair of discs, incidentally, has not yet been issued by Victor, the records having been imported from Europe.



WAGNER
PD-95438
and
PD-95439
IMPORTED

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE: (a) *Prelude*. (b) *Isoldes Liebestod*.
Four sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wil-
helm Furtwängler. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 40.

In his "Music Come To Earth," the late Adolf Weissmann discovers, not without some alarm, that the machine-age is no fit place for *Tristan und Isolde*. "The machine," he announces, "turns against *Tristan*." He admits that "for some fifty years the miracle of *Tristan* was potent," and he further concedes that "its radia-
tions reach down to the present day." But it is rapidly losing significance for the twentieth century music lover. "In our practical age *Tristan* begins to be a petrified miracle," and the "solemnity of love, as it was glorified by musicians, glorified in *Tristan*, is dealt its death-blow by psycho-analysis." Moreover, women "who devote themselves to sport, whose moral life approximates more and more closely to that of the men whose rights they claim, will not find it easy to attain the psychic disposition to make themselves receptive for a work like *Tristan*."

From all this it would appear that Weissmann had been subjected to a somewhat heavy dose of Freud, or rather to a heavy dose of some of the more rash followers of Freud. None will gainsay the professor in his implication that psycho-analysis has rather gone to the heads of some people, making them a bit silly and too eager to accept what seem to be shocking explanations for every human motive, but was it to these people that Wagner addressed his masterpiece? Must an audience groan with all sorts of devastating complexes and inhibitions in order to appreciate *Tristan*? Must an audience, by the same token, believe implicitly in the piety and dogma of Bach's age in order to appreciate the B Minor Mass or the St. Matthew's Passion? The greater freedom of the present age will of course make *Tristan* seem irrelevant and dull to those people whose conception of that greater freedom lies in more and better bad-gin parties and roadside necking; but it hardly seems to matter much whether or not these people "find it easy to attain the psychic disposition to make themselves receptive for a work like *Tristan*." Deprive them of their bad-gin parties and roadside necking and fill them with inhibitions, and it yet seems very unlikely that they would work off their misery by attending performances of Wagner's masterpiece. They would more probably be seeking comfort in the maudlin drivel that covers most of the moving picture screens of the world. . . . And at any rate one notes that *Tristan und Isolde*, when what promises to be a first-rate performance is advertised, still attracts large audiences of genuine music lovers; the complete recording of the work, even in spite of some serious flaws and a much-cut and mangled third act, sold uncom-
monly well; and a good rendition of the Prelude and Liebestod on a symphony program still fetches a liberal amount of applause. So that if the "mechanical eroticism," as Weissmann calls it, of tabloid newspaper readers, tired business men and intellectual rural clubwomen who have read "Jürgen" renders them incapable of appreciating *Tristan*, it is too bad but hardly very alarming; the world luckily is not yet composed solely of such people.

The record collector must have long since felt keenly the absence of a really

first-rate recording of the Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan*.¹ This peerless music of Wagner's, it is astonishing to recall, has only been attempted, in a rather half-hearted way, two or three times. There is plenty of inferior music, of far less popular appeal than the Prelude and Liebestod, that has been recorded countless times. The Columbia *Tristan* albums contain a well-recorded and adequately played Prelude, but today we are entitled to expect something more from a record than an adequate performance; moreover, the Liebestod in that recording is wretchedly done.

Thus these glowing records of Furtwängler's fill a glaring gap in the catalogues. They also are especially interesting because shortly after they were recorded Furtwängler left for Bayreuth to conduct *Tristan und Isolde* at the Festival there this Summer. It is difficult to speak of records like these without resorting to all the superlatives that can be found in a good Thesaurus. It would scarcely be saying too much to assert, indeed, that only the exceptional actual performance can give us a better idea of this music. Furtwängler's skilful hand is evident throughout the four sides, and he is conducting a wonderfully responsive and capable orchestra. The slow, sad opening, high up in the 'cellos, is expressively played, and the superb climax, combining the motives of the Magic, the Look and Tristan's Sorrow, comes off magnificently here. And the incomparable surge and rise and fall of the Liebestod, with the tremendously eloquent outburst near the end, could scarcely be more revealingly done. Here, where most recordings of the Liebestod grow woefully muddled and cloudy, the reproduction remains crystal clear, and the immense volume is handled perfectly. Furtwängler has never done more completely satisfying and thrilling phonograph work. It is pleasant to report, in conclusion, that the recording succeeds in presenting the entire performance with splendid power, volume and clarity. Although one record is labelled the Prelude and the other the Liebestod, the conclusion of the former is carried over to the first side of the latter, so that it is advisable that purchasers of the set obtain both discs at the same time.

ROSSINI
B-90188

{ LA GAZZA LADRA: *Overture*. Two sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Score: *Philharmonia* No. 112.

This disc belongs beside Toscanini's superlative recording of the Overture to the *Barber of Seville*. Everyone recalls the success of that disc when it appeared a little over a year ago, and there is every reason to suppose that Furtwängler's superb reading of the *Thieving Magpie* Overture will attain similar popularity. The opera was produced in 1817, but the Overture, which is said to contain the finest music in the score, is about all that has survived. A lively and genial piece of music, it has an irresistible appeal when played so deftly as the Berlin Philharmonic and Furtwängler play it here. The discipline and responsiveness of this band are admirable. Their climaxes, brilliant and imposing in the extreme, are achieved with impressive effect. What in less competent hands would be rather dull and vulgar becomes here a sparkling and immensely exhilarating piece of music. Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic are said to be contemplating a visit to the United States this season. The former conducted at Bayreuth this Summer.





BEETHOVEN
B-90179
to
B-90185

SYMPHONY NO. 9 (*Choral*) in D Minor. Fourteen sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Oscar Fried, with the Bruno Kittel Choir. Soloists: Lotte Leonard (Soprano), Jenny Sonnenberg (Contralto), Eugen Transky (Tenor), and Wilhelm Guttmann (Bass). Seven 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 31. \$10.50.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 30.

When adverse criticism is directed toward the recording companies for being unwilling to take a chance, it should always be remembered in their favor that in the very first year of electrical reproduction both of the leading manufacturers issued versions of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. This was quite a feat in those days, when the catalogues, though bristling with the more commonplace operatic arias and popular numbers, revealed astonishingly little in the way of good music. While at the time the releases were fervently welcomed and even seemed marvels of reproduction, subsequent developments caused most collectors to wish that the companies had not been quite so hasty. Their admirable promptness in issuing the work had its unfavorable side, too. Electrical recording, at the time of the Ninth Symphony releases, was yet in a crude state, not greatly superior, save in the matter of volume, to acoustical recording. But in a few years the recording engineers improved and developed their art to an amazing degree, making their previous achievements seem more or less ludicrous and inconsequential. The Ninth Symphony albums were thus marred by feeble and mediocre recording, whereas if they had been postponed a year or so they would have been free from the many flaws that now make listening to them an enterprise requiring some courage and considerable patience. Felix Weingartner's set, for Columbia, is perhaps a shade better recorded than is Coates', for Victor, but then the latter's is incomparably the finer interpretation. But both, compared to present-day records, sound weak and inadequate. . . . The fact that in spite of all these defects the two recordings of the Ninth have been among the most popular numbers in the catalogues constitutes a high tribute to the greatness of the Symphony—and also reflects no little credit on the tastes of record collectors.

Brunswick, in repressing and making domestically available the Polydor version of the Ninth, makes a substantial and noteworthy addition to its excellent album sets, for the Polydor version, in spite of some shortcomings, gives a far more vivid and effective reproduction of the Symphony than do either of the earlier recordings.

Beethoven had long brooded on the idea of the Ninth before actually beginning to work on it. Sketches in his notebooks dating back as far as 1817 show that he had planned to use the human voice in a symphony sooner or later. Moreover, the *Ode to Joy* of the German poet Schiller was greatly admired by the composer, and indeed as early as 1793 he had intended to provide an elaborate musical setting for the piece. In 1818 he began work on the Symphony. Six years later—on May 7, 1824—the first performance occurred at the Kärntnerthor Theatre in Vienna. The pathetic story of the totally deaf Beethoven, standing next to the conductor and oblivious to the tremendous applause that followed the completion of the performance, is thus told by Sir George Grove:



The master, though placed in the midst of this confluence of music, heard nothing of it at all, and was not even sensible of the applause of the audience at the end of his great work, but continued standing with his back to the audience, *and beating time*, till Fräulein Unger . . . turned him, or induced him to turn round and face the people, who were still clapping their hands and giving way to the greatest demonstrations of pleasure. His turning around, and the sudden conviction thereby forced on everybody that he had not done so before *because he could not hear what was going on*, acted like an electric shock on all present, and a volcanic explosion of sympathy and admiration followed, which was repeated again and again, and seemed as if it would never end.

The fierce debate over the merits of the last movement, too, is well known; few works have aroused such diversity of authoritative critical opinion. There are those who believe that the choral music, compared to the preceding three movements, is a decided let-down, and there are others who consider it indescribably wonderful, a magnificent ending to a magnificent work. Since there are distinguished authorities on both sides of the question, it therefore resolves itself more or less into a matter of personal opinion, and the recording of the Symphony now gives everyone an opportunity to decide for himself whether or not Beethoven made a mistake in employing voices in the last movement.

The vagueness and vastness of the first movement, the robust briskness of the burly Scherzo—the recording here, incidentally, is particularly gratifying, and the important part for the timpani is recorded very realistically,—the anguish and mystery of the Adagio, the sudden rush of joy and the sweeping power of the last movement—all this is realized with great success by Fried, the orchestra and the recorders. His reading lacks the vigor and energy that mark Coates' version, but it is a carefully planned and well-balanced one. The Bruno Kittel Choir and the soloists sing superbly, and the balance between the orchestra and chorus is always good. The recording is on the whole satisfying, but now and then it is not entirely free from a certain coarseness. . . . Until Toscanini is persuaded to record the work, or Coates is allowed to re-record his version, this set will provide an adequate recording of the Ninth Symphony, without which no record collection can be considered comprehensive.

FRANCK

V-W1159

and

V-P860

IMPORTED

RÉDEMPTION. Three sides and

PSYCHÉ: *Psyché enlevée par les Zéphyrs*. One side. Société des Concerts du Conservatoire conducted by Piero Coppola. One 12-inch disc. \$2. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Albert Wolff's fine recording of *Rédemption* was reviewed on page 171 of the June, 1931, issue of *Disques*, where brief notes on the music will be found. This version by Coppola is equally as good as Wolff's; in interpretation, rendition and recording both reach high levels of excellence. The music itself, though by no means representative of Franck at his best, is of more than ordinary interest when played so well as Coppola and Wolff play it, and so its inclusion in the record repertoire is well worth-while. . . . The odd side of the set gives us still another section of Franck's suite, *Psyché*. We have already had two of the six sections, *Psyché et Eros* and *Sommeil de Psyché*; and this recording supplies No. 2 of the suite: *Psyché enlevée par les Zéphyrs*. It is quiet, restful music, finely interpreted and recorded here.



RAVEL
B-90186
and
B-90187

{ LA VALSE: *Choreographic Poem*. Four sides. Lamoureux
Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

In this dazzling and immensely effective "apotheosis of the Viennese waltz," as it has been called, Ravel has put some of his best work. Like the *Bolero*, it is a glittering piece of orchestration, full of ingenious and daring touches, but it is much more than that. It is not only succeeds in evoking the essential charm and gusto of the Viennese waltz in a manner unequalled by the host of composers who have made similar attempts; it also achieves, and with overwhelming success, a feeling of impending disaster. This feeling is present throughout the work. Beginning ominously, the music soon resolves itself into a series of waltzes, but even in the gayest and most abandoned of them the note of tragedy, the undercurrent of turbulent gloom, is never wholly absent. *La Valse* is, in consequence, a good deal more than a pleasant duplication of the joyous and untroubled waltz as Strauss and Lanner conceived it. The fact that Ravel wrote the work during the War may account in part for the feeling of oppressiveness that pervades the work.

The following is prefaced to the score: "At first the scene is dimmed by a kind of swirling mist, through which one discerns, vaguely and intermittently, the waltzing couples. Little by little the vapors disperse, the illumination grows brighter, revealing an immense ballroom filled with dancers; the blaze of the chandeliers comes to full splendor. An imperial Court about 1855."

This is a brilliant and sympathetic interpretation of *La Valse*, and the recording succeeds in reproducing the complex score clearly and faithfully.

LISZT
C-LX132
IMPORTED

{ HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 12. (Liszt-Doppler) Two
sides. Hallé Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Harty.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

This record deserves attention chiefly because of the excellent playing by the Hallé Orchestra and the fine recording. The Liszt Hungarian Rhapsodies, whether in their original pianoforte arrangement or in the orchestral version, are not so stirring as once they were, but somehow Sir Hamilton Harty and his splendidly drilled orchestra contrive to make No. 12 glow with life and brilliance here. The full, round tone of the brass instruments, the warmth of the strings, the beautiful playing of the woodwinds, and the fine balance of the entire orchestra—these lift the record to a slightly higher level than a recording of a Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody would ordinarily occupy. Sir Hamilton, incidentally, made his Hollywood Bowl début this Summer.

MOSZKOW-
SKI
V-22769

{ BOLERO IN D MAJOR, Op. 12, No. 5. One side and
SPANISH DANCE in G Minor, Op. 12, No. 2. One side.
Victor Concert Orchestra conducted by Rosario Bourdon.
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

The recording and playing are excellent; but there isn't much in the music.

GRÉTRY
C-LFX65
IMPORTED

{ **CÉPHALE ET PROCRIS:** *Airs de Ballet.* (Grétry-Mottl)
Two sides. Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra conducted by
Désiré Defauw. One 12-inch disc. \$2.



JONGEN
C-DFX51
and
C-DF182
IMPORTED

{ **PETITE SUITE:** (a) *March militaire*; (b) *Conte plaisant*;
(c) *Nostalgie*; (d) *Tambourin*; (e) *Valse gracieuse*. Four
sides. Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra conducted by
Joseph Jongen. One 12-inch disc. \$2. One 10-inch disc. \$1.

André Ernest Modeste Grétry was born at Liège in 1741 and died in Paris in 1813. Greatly honored and immensely popular in his day, Grétry was the composer of numerous light operas. His chief merit as a composer lies in his uncommon gift for producing striking, well-turned melodies. Grétry's musical knowledge was defective in several respects, and he had a very meagre grasp of harmony. Termed "the Molière of music" by his contemporaries, he is said to have founded the school of French comedy-opera, to which Boieldieu, Auber and Adam later made many important contributions. *Céphale et Procris*, now all but forgotten, was produced in 1775. The tunes from it given here, orchestrated by Mottl, are lacking in distinction, but they make fairly pleasant listening. Lead by Désiré Defauw, the Brussels Conservatory Orchestra presents them attractively.

Joseph Jongen, who conducts the same band in a recording of his own *Petite Suite*, is the present director of the Brussels Royal Conservatory. Born at Liège in 1873, he received all his musical education in the Conservatory of that city. Subsequently he won several prizes, among them the Grand Prix de Rome and an award of a thousand francs for the composition of a string quartet. After a period of travel, imposed by the Prix de Rome, he returned to Belgium in 1902, and was appointed professor of harmony and counterpoint at the Liège Conservatory. With the outbreak of the War in 1914, he emigrated to England, where he formed a piano quartet with Désiré Defauw, Lionel Tertis and Emile Doejaerd. At the conclusion of the War, Jongen returned to Belgium.

The *Petite Suite*, highly conventional and ordinary music, is not very rewarding. Glance at the titles of the various sections, and you will have a pretty good idea of what it is like. Beginning with a dull *Marche militaire*, Jongen proceeds with an insipid *Conte plaisant*; this is followed by a mawkish *Nostalgie*, and it, in turn, by a banal *Tambourin*. An incredibly chaste and decorous waltz, mincing, lifeless, watery, and utterly lacking in the charm and abandon which should be an integral part of every waltz, concludes the Suite. It is to be hoped that there are not many such aberrations in the professor's list of works. Good recording prevails throughout.

BOCCHERINI
HAYDN
V-7256

{ **MINUET.** (Boccherini) One side and
18th CENTURY DANCE. (Haydn) One side. Philadelphia
Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Lovely string tone is the outstanding feature of this record. It was reviewed, from the imported pressing, on page 72 of the April, 1931, issue of *Disques*.



CHAMBER MUSIC

DVORÁK

C-67958D

to

C-67961D

QUINTET IN A MAJOR, Op. 81. Eight sides. Léner String Quartet and Olga Loeser-Lebert (Piano).
Four 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 161. \$6.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 305.

In 1884 Dvorák, encouraged by his steadily increasing fame, bought himself a small homestead called "Vysoká" near the town of Príbram in Southern Bohemia. Here, amid the peaceful surroundings in which he was happiest, he composed some of his most significant works, among which might be mentioned: a series of eight Slavonic Dances, Op. 72; the pianoforte duets, *From the Bohemian Forest*, Op. 68; the String Quartet in C Major, Op. 61; the Pianoforte Quartet in E Flat, Op. 87; the *Dumky* Trio, Op. 90; the Symphony in G Major, Op. 88; the three Overtures, *Amid Nature*, Op. 91, *Carneval*, Op. 92, and *Otello*, Op. 93; and this charming Quintet in A Major, Op. 81, for string quartet and piano.

Composed in 1887, the Quintet is widely esteemed for its buoyant, expansive melodies, its purity of style and its deft, accomplished writing. It should be noted that the second movement is a *Dumka* and the Scherzo a *Furiant*. Both of these forms, derived from the folk-music of Bohemia, are picturesque and colorful; they often appear in Dvorák's music. The former is thus defined by Grove's: "A term introduced into the terminology of cosmopolitan music by Dvorák, in whose chamber music it is of frequent occurrence as the name of a movement of melancholy character in more or less slow tempo. . . . the term is explained as a Little Russian word, occurring frequently in popular literature, and generally indicating a passionately emotional character." The *Furiant*, explains the same high authority, is "a movement of a fiery, impulsive character, such as would be classed under the general name of scherzo. Like *Dumka*, it has been introduced into the terminology of classical music by Dvorák, who uses both frequently in his chamber music."

This well-rounded Quintet is in four movements. The writing for the piano and string quartet is skilful and unfailingly charming. There is a wealth of lovely melodies, genuinely Schubertian in character, which Dvorák combines and contrasts with striking effect, and the piano part, giving greater solidity and strength to the work and adding color to the whole, is well-balanced with the strings. An appealing melody for the 'cello, supported by the piano, begins the first movement; the other strings then enter, and the music becomes more vigorous and impassioned, closing with a brisk coda. The melancholy of the *Dumka* is relieved, about half-way through the movement, by a sprightly little dance. The brief *Furiant* is a gay and irresistible movement, employing the various instruments skilfully and colorfully. An energetic and lively Finale closes an altogether delightful work.

This is not the first recording of the Quintet in A Major, the National Gramo-

phonic Society having issued a version several years ago. But an easily accessible set has been needed, and it would be difficult to conceive of performers more competent and better adapted to play the work than the Léners and the excellent pianist who assists them in this recording. Considering Dvorák's popularity and the attractive qualities of his music, it is puzzling that his works haven't been more thoroughly explored by the recording companies. The *New World*, the *Carneval* Overture, the 'Cello Concerto, the Symphony in G Major, some of the Slavonic Dances, the *American* Quartet, this Quintet in A Major, a few songs and violin pieces—this is about all that has been recorded of the Bohemian master's works. There are several other quartets of his that would make fine recording material, and what about the *Dumky* Trio? Now, when the recording companies seem hard put to it to find suitable things to record, would surely be the appropriate time to do some of his less familiar works.



The beautiful rendition of the Quintet calls for nothing but praise. Similarly excellent is the recording; the delicacy, proportion, balance and clarity of the reproduction are remarkably fine, making this one of the most attractive recordings of the month. Incidentally, though recorded in Europe, the set seems to receive its first release through the American Columbia Company.

BEETHOVEN	{	SONATA IN A MAJOR (<i>Kreutzer</i>), Op. 47. Eight sides.
C-67954D		Bronislaw Huberman (Violin) and Ignaz Friedman (Piano).
to C-67957D		Four 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 160. \$8.

The *Kreutzer* Sonata is one of those works that has suffered from an excess of attention and popularity. One can hear all one wants of it almost any musical season, and, failing that, there are always several excellent recordings to which one can resort. The two artists who play it here seem intent on making it sound as it must have sounded to Tolstoi's unhappy hero. They are, of course, unsuccessful, since the music is about as erotic as a poem by Henry Van Dyke. But whatever its other faults may be, their interpretation has at least this virtue: it differs sharply from those contained in the other sets. Fiery, impulsive, dashing, it is far and away the most energetic and spirited performance we have on discs.

Parts of the set thus sound downright crude and unfinished. With such a fine disregard for the niceties as these two artists exhibit, flaws would be almost inevitable. In the first and last movements this is particularly noticeable. Here Huberman's tone is not always of the best, and the balance between the two instruments occasionally seems faulty. Their playing of the Theme and Variations, though, is more poised and considered, and the breath-taking speed with which the first movement is taken is here relinquished for a more leisurely and thoughtful pace.

The recording is full and brilliant, almost too powerful in spots. The piano part comes out better than in any other recording with which we are familiar. Those who haven't a *Kreutzer* on their shelves may find the tremendous gusto with which these artists play it more stimulating than Thibaud and Cortot's quiet, polished rendition. But if you already have a *Kreutzer*, there is nothing here



to warrant your duplicating the set—unless your fondness for the music is carried to somewhat inordinate lengths.

MOZART

C-LFX148

and

C-LFX149

IMPORTED

TRIO NO. 3 *in E Major.* (K. 542) Four sides. Court of Belgium Trio. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

The Court of Belgium Trio, which in recent months has given us unfamiliar trios by Schumann, Saint-Saëns, César Franck, and Joaquin Turina, could scarcely have made a happier choice this month than the previously unrecorded Mozart Trio in E Major. Considered by Grove's to be the most important of the works Mozart wrote for piano, 'cello and violin, it is a delightful piece of chamber music, and makes a welcome addition to the list of Mozart recordings, which has been growing by leaps and bounds of late, and in fact is this month increased not only by the above Trio but also by the great G Minor Symphony, reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

The National Gramophone Society several months ago issued the Trio in G Major, No. 5 of the series, and in character, mood and general outline the two works closely resemble each other. Both were written in 1788, both were composed for performance at private music meetings, both give most prominence to the piano, both are filled with sparkling little melodies whose graceful and unexpected turns and twists far remove them from any suggestion of banality, and, finally, both are light and merry in mood. The G Major, however, was originally a pianoforte sonata, later hastily re-written by Mozart for violin, 'cello and piano, while the E Major was originally conceived as a trio.

Like the G Major, the E Major impresses at once because of its refreshing simplicity. The violin and 'cello are kept more or less in the background, especially the latter, which is used for the most part as a bass instrument. There are three movements: an Allegro, an Andante Grazioso and the Finale. Jahn, in his "Life of Mozart," agrees with Grove's as to the superior merits of this Trio. "There can at least be no question as to the superiority of this Trio in design and originality, as well as in the effective treatment of the instruments," he says. "The first movement is full of fire and energy, the imitative working out of the second subject being wonderfully heightened in effect by a bold harmonic inflection. The second movement, with something of the character of a national melody, is fresh and charming, and has rhythmic and harmonic points which give it a piquancy altogether modern. The last movement, though not devoid of expression and delicacy, is inferior in vital energy to the first, and seems somewhat too long, perhaps because an exclusive attention to brilliancy loses its effect upon hearers of our day."

The Court of Belgium Trio gives a sincere, straightforward interpretation; the three instruments are beautifully balanced, and the recording is carefully and smoothly done. A highly competent and rewarding piece of music, recording and interpretation, the set can thus be unreservedly recommended.

PIANO



**WAGNER
SCHUBERT
MENDELSSOHN**
PD-95419
and
PD-95420

IMPORTED

TANNHÄUSER: *Overture*. (Liszt-Wagner) One side and
(a) **MOMENT MUSICAL**, Op. 94, No. 3. (Schubert) (b)
SPINNERLIED. (Mendelssohn) One side. Alexander Brailowsky (Piano). Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

We have had plenty of *Tannhäuser* Overtures since the introduction of electrical recording some years back, but the Liszt piano transcription of the work, so popular in the concert hall, has not previously been attempted. Here Brailowsky supplies as stirring a version as could be imagined. An uncommonly gifted virtuoso, he pounds his way through the piece magnificently, and all the thunder has been transferred to the discs with very little loss. Even Polydor, famed as the company which first managed to make piano records recognizable, has never given us more vivid and powerful piano recording than here. Yet for all the power and heavy volume, the balance and clarity are singularly good. The more subdued Schubert and Mendelssohn pieces, grouped on the final side of the set, are adequately played and skilfully recorded.

DEBUSSY
V-1531

DANSEUSES DE DELPHES (*No. 1 from First Book of Preludes*). One side and
VOILES. (*No. 2 from First Book of Preludes*). One side.
Ignace Jan Paderewski (Piano). One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

These two Debussy numbers are sympathetically played and beautifully recorded here, though the genuine admirer of Debussy would probably prefer them played by some other pianist, as would the genuine admirer of Paderewski prefer him in Chopin. But there is not an abundance of good recordings of either *Veils* or the *Dancing Virgins of Delphi*, so that it is good to have so capably recorded versions of them by so skilful a pianist as Paderewski.

CHOPIN
V-C2010
and
V-B3550

IMPORTED

MAZURKAS: *A Minor*, Op. 68, No. 2; *A Minor*, Op. 67, No. 4; *F Sharp Minor*, Op. 59, No. 3; *B Minor*, Op. 30, No. 2; *C Sharp Minor*, Op. 63, No. 3; *F*, Op. 68, No. 3. Four sides. Niedzielski (Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.75. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Columbia recently gave us an album of Chopin's Mazurkas, twelve in all, and fortunately those Niedzielski has selected for these two discs are, with the exception of Op. 67, No. 4, and Op. 68, No. 2, not duplications of those contained in the Columbia set. Notes on the Mazurkas were included in the review of the album (page 175 of the June, 1931, *Disques*). Niedzielski plays the numbers here with great charm and force, and the recording is thoroughly satisfactory.



OPERA

GIORDANO
C-GQX10106
to
C-GQX10118
IMPORTED

ANDREA CHENIER: *Opera in Four Acts.* Italian Operatic Artists, La Scala Chorus and Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli.
Thirteen 12-inch discs in album. \$26.

THE CAST

Maddalena di Coigny.....	Bruna Rasa
Andrea Chenier.....	Luigi Marini
Carlo Gerard.....	Carlo Galeffi
La Contessa di Coigny.....	{ Anna Masetti Bassi
Maddelon.....	
La mulatta Bersi.....	Ida Conti
Roucher.....	{ Salvatore Baccaloni
Fouquer Tinville.....	
Il sanculotto Mathieu.....	{ Aristide Baracchi
Il romanziere.....	
L'Abate.....	{ Giuseppi Nessi
Un "incredible".....	
Il maestro di casa.....	{ Natale Villa
Dumas.....	
Schmidt.....	

Even the depression, now circling the globe, as Mr. Hoover is so fond of pointing out, does not seem to have much of an effect upon the expensive business of recording complete operas—and this in spite of the fact that most of the best known ones, *i.e.*, those most likely to enjoy a wide sale, have already been recorded. The fact that the works of Verdi and Puccini, the two Italian standbys, have been pretty well exhausted for phonographic purposes has not discouraged the Italian recording companies. Recently early works of Verdi and operas of Donizetti in abridged recordings have been issued, and now Giordano's complete *Andrea Chenier*, produced with great care and skill, appears. Whether there is much demand for the whole of this work on records is rather doubtful, but certainly it will afford a great deal of pleasure to the avid opera lover.

One of the leading Italian operatic composers of the last generation, Umberto Giordano was born in 1867. His musical talent came to light at an early age, and in 1888 his opera *Marina* was mentioned in the Sonzogno Competition. Various other operas followed *Marina*, but it was *Andrea Chenier*, produced at La Scala in 1896, that really established Giordano's fame and carried his name around the world. Like Mascagni and Leoncavallo, Giordano achieved his great success with one work, and like them, too, will probably be remembered, if at all, by that one work.

His exuberant and often banal melodies are well sung here, and the Milan Symphony plows its way through the noisy and not overly meticulous score with great vigor. There is some spirited singing by La Scala Chorus, and the recording is achieved with the utmost care and skill.

**PUCCINI
GOUNOD**

V-7401

- { LA BOHÈME: Act 1—*Che gelida manina.* (Puccini) One side and
FAUST: Act 3—*Salve, dimora, caste e pura.* (Gounod) One side.
Antonio Cortis (Tenor) and La Scala Orchestra conducted by
Carlo Sabajno. One 12-inch disc. \$2.



**MEYERBEER
GIORDANO**

V-1527

- { L'AFRICANA: Act 4—*O Paradiso.* (Meyerbeer) One side and
ANDREA CHENIER: Act 2—*Credo a una possanza.* (Giordano) One side.
Antonio Cortis (Tenor) and La Scala Orchestra conducted by
Carlo Sabajno. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Both of these discs come from the current Victor Export List. They reveal a good tenor, competent playing by the Scala Orchestra and very good recording. The music offers nothing new, most of the numbers having been recorded countless times.

SULLIVAN
V-11070
to
V-11079

- { PATIENCE: *Comic Opera in Two Acts.* (Gilbert-Sullivan)
Twenty sides. Darrell Fancourt, Martyn Green, Derek Oldham, George Baker, Leslie Rands, Nellie Briercliffe, Marjorie Eyre, Rita Mackay, Bertha Lewis, Winifred Lawson, Chorus and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent.
Ten 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set C-14. \$15.

Rupert d'Oyly Carte has charge of the performance, and as is the case with all the numbers in the H. M. V. Gilbert and Sullivan series, the results are unfailingly delightful. The set was reviewed, from the imported pressing, on page 82 of the April, 1931, issue of *Disques. Patience* ranks with *Pinafore* and *Iolanthe* as the salient achievements of this group of performers thus far.

STRAUS
V-30457
to
V-30462

- { THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER: *Operetta in Three Acts (Abridged).* Twelve sides. Eduardo Mir, Margarita Cueto, Conchita Bañuls, Soledad Espinal, José Moriche, Juan Pulido, Héctor de Lara, Chorus and International Concert Orchestra conducted by Eduardo Vigil y Robles.
Six 10-inch discs in album. Victor Set S-9. \$5.

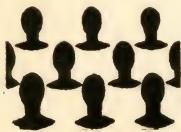
The past year has been marked, among other things, by an increasing interest in light music on the part of the manufacturers. Whereas in former years light music was recognized by the companies only in the form of single record releases, whole albums are nowadays devoted to operettas, waltzes and zarzuelas. This recording of the *Chocolate Soldier*, intended primarily for South American consumption, appears on the current Victor Export List and is thus sung in Spanish.

Oscar Straus, born in Vienna in 1870, began his musical career as a composer of serious music. Later, turning to operetta, he wrote satirical stories in the Offenbach manner. Viennese operettas next occupied his attention, and later, when the fox-trot began its noisy sweeping of the world, he began making use of modern dances in his works. Today he is one of the most esteemed composers of



light music. He visited America this past season, and even spent sometime in Hollywood preparing scores for the movies.

One of his best liked and finest operettas, the *Chocolate Soldier* makes a pleasant addition to the series of Spanish zarzuelas and operettas that have recently been added to the Victor Export Catalogue. This recording, abridged with great care, includes only the outstanding numbers, and no dialogue is given, so that all of the records are devoted to Straus' tuneful music. The cast, though Spanish, renders the work with the proper spirit. The soloists are satisfactory, and there is a spirited chorus and orchestra to assist them. The recording is good.



FAURÉ
V-W1154
to
V-W1158
IMPORTED

CHORAL

REQUIEM. Ten sides. Malnory-Marseillac (Soprano), Louis Morturier (Bass), and Choir of the Bach Society, Paris, with Orchestra and Organ, under the direction of Gustave Bret.
Five 12-inch discs in album. \$10.

Today it is difficult to recognize in the music of Gabriel Fauré any trace of the then somewhat shocking modernism imputed to this composer when he emerged upon the scene some sixty years ago. Perhaps whatever modernism there is associated with his name may be more readily seen in the work of his distinguished pupils—Ravel, Schmitt, and Roger-Ducasse. It seems more logical to mention Fauré in the same breath with Gounod and Saint-Saëns than with this later group. Certainly a hearing of the *Requiem* would lead one to this conclusion.

Beginning his musical studies at Niedermeyer's School of Religious Music in Paris, Fauré, in addition to his great activity as a composer, spent most of his long life of almost eighty years as a teacher and church organist. For fifteen years he was Director of the Paris Conservatory, for nineteen years choirmaster and for nine years organist at the famous Church of the Madeleine. It was in this church on January 16, 1888, that the *Requiem* had its first rendition.

Strictly speaking it is not a liturgical work, as the text of the Mass has been considerably altered, but perhaps in the lax and legendary 90's before the promulgation of the *Motu Proprio*, and in Paris where many things are (or were) permitted, it was so used. The Church of the Madeleine was noted for the sensuousness of its music. Indeed it has been said that the performance of Gounod's masses there "used to be regarded by ladies of fashion and quality as something in the light of an orgy." Perhaps the leniency even extended to deviations from the prescribed text.

Seven numbers, no one of which conforms to liturgical requirements, constitute the work:

1. *Introit (Requiem Aeternam)* and *Kyrie*.

2. *Offertorium (O Domine Jesu Christe).*
3. *Sanctus.*
4. *Pie Jesu.*
5. *Agnus Dei.*
6. *Libera Me.*
7. *In Paradisum.*



It would be tiresome and profitless here to enumerate its liturgical shortcomings, many of which are readily apparent from a glance at the above list.

As a piece of religious music of a personal and subjective character, without reference to the Liturgy, the Fauré *Requiem* might be called the French counterpart of the Brahms *Requiem*. Dr. Rene Agrain, in his recent book "Religious Music," speaks of Fauré as "the ever-memorable and pure musician," and says that "if he has risked in his *Requiem* some retouches of the Latin text which are not authorized by the rubrics, that is indeed the only reproach that can be addressed to the poem of serenity which renders with such transparent and exquisite originality the peace of the soul in the presence of death; this luminous work exhales and chants 'repose' (*et lux perpetua . . .*); its conception of death is that of the Church, who petitions for her children repose and light."

Both performance and recording are admirable, except for the peculiar French pronunciation of the letter "u". Mme. Malnory-Marseillac's voice is one of those unearthly organs which lift the hearer beyond this world and convey to him some sense of the eternal peace of Paradise.

HERBERT BOYCE SATCHER

GRETCHAN- INOFF ARCHANGEL- SKY V-36040	I BELIEVE. (Gretchaninoff) One side and LORD, LISTEN TO MY PRAYER. (Archangelsky) One side. Choir of the Russian Church of the Metropolitan of Paris conducted by N. P. Afonsky. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.
TSCHAI- KOWSKY IVANOFF V-B3789 <small>IMPORTED</small>	
OUR FATHER. (Tschaikowsky) One side and PRAISE BE THE NAME OF THE LORD. (Ivanoff) One side. Choir of the Russian Church of the Metropolitan of Paris conducted by N. P. Afonsky. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.	

Sung in Russian without accompaniment, these four numbers are excellently recorded and rendered. The choir sings with impressive sincerity and earnestness, and the music is very moving. The recording is full and well-rounded, with no suggestion of blasting or any of the more serious evils of choral reproduction.

Gretchaninoff's *Creed* is the finest number of the group. Intoned by a soloist with a hummed accompaniment, it is remarkably simple, yet immensely impressive, and it is, in addition, authentically Russian. Both records, which were recorded in Paris, should be of more than ordinary interest to those seeking a genuine novelty.

Recent Victor Releases

MUSICAL MASTERPIECE

Symphony No. 40, in G Minor by Mozart. Played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock, on three 12-inch Victor Records (Nos. 7394-7396). In automatic sequence (Nos. 7397-7399). In Album M-109, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

At last here it is . . . a crying need is now fulfilled! The classic beauty of the Mozart G Minor Symphony has been magnificently played and recorded by Frederick Stock and the Chicago Orchestra. Delicacy, grace, flashes of gaiety, and wistfulness are blended in this famous composition. It belongs in every representative record collection . . . do not exclude it from yours.

CONCERT SERIES

Patience, by Gilbert and Sullivan. Performed by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, on ten 12-inch Victor Records (Nos. 11070-11079). In automatic sequence (Nos. 11080-11089). In Album C-14, with libretto. List price, \$15.00.

Another of the charming operas by that matchless team, Gilbert and Sullivan! No need to depend upon occasional revivals of this entertaining comedy, when an album like this is available. Hear, when the spirit moves you, the sparkling word play . . . the entrancing rhythm of text and music. You need never experience a dull moment with this album in your collection. The voices are excellent . . . and since the recorded performance was directed by Rupert D'Oyly Carte, you are certain that all the tradition of the original productions is preserved!

RED SEAL RECORDS

Minuet (Boccherini) and

18th Century Dance (Haydn). Played by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on Victor Record No. 7256. List price, \$2.00.

The Irish Emigrant and

By the Short Cut to the Rosses. Sung by John McCormack, with piano accompaniment, on Victor Record No. 1528. List price, \$1.50.

Dancing Virgins of Delphi (Debussy) and

Veils (Debussy). Played by Ignace Jan Paderewski on Victor Record No. 1531. List price, \$1.50.

Von Ewiger Liebe (Brahms) and
(Eternal Love)

Ruhe Süssliebchen (Brahms)
(Rest Thee, My Darling)

Sung by Mme. Sigrid Onegin, with piano accompaniment, on Victor Record No. 7402. List price, \$2.00.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.

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VOCAL



BRAHMS
V-7402

{ VON EWIGER LIEBE, Op. 43, No. 1. One side and
RUHE SÜSSELIEBCHEN IM SCHATTEN, Op. 33, No. 9.
One side. Sigrid Onegin (Contralto) with piano accompaniment by Franz Rupp. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

DUFFERIN HOPPER
V-1528

{ THE IRISH EMIGRANT. (Lady Dufferin-G. Barker) One side and
BY THE SHORT CUT TO THE ROSES. (Nora Hopper-C. Milligan Fox) One side. John McCormack (Tenor) with piano accompaniment by Edwin Schneider.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

The Brahms songs are movingly sung by Sigrid Onegin, whose superb contralto is recorded here with great skill. She is ably supported by Franz Rupp. . . . John McCormack's many admirers will probably rejoice that his name again appears on the Victor list after a long absence. Both of the banal and inconsequential songs he gives here are not calculated to arouse much enthusiasm. The recording is good.

ORGAN

BACH
C-G7173M

{ FANTASIA IN G MINOR. Two sides. Louis Vierne (Organ).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

V-C2050
IMPORTED

{ PRELUDE IN E FLAT. Two sides. Guy Weitz (Organ).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Louis Vierne, playing on the organ of Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, gives an excellent performance. The recording is extremely powerful, so that the tone is often coarse. Yet, as organ records go, it is a very good one. . . . Guy Weitz plays the Prelude in E Flat on the organ of St. Thomas' Church, Wandsworth. The recording, smoother than that in the Vierne disc, is excellent. Organ records having been rather scarce of late, two Bach numbers like these should be welcomed.



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF
SEPTEMBER

Album No. 31 90179 to 90185 incl.	BEETHOVEN —SYMPHONY NO. 9—D MINOR (Choral)—Op. 125 Seven Records THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN OSCAR FRIED, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$10.50 Compl. with album
90177	BUXTEHUDE —PRELUDE AND FUGUE G MINOR Parts I and II Organ Solo— ALFRED SITTARD Recorded on the Organ of St. Michael's Church, Hamburg	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
90186 90187	RAVEL —LA VALSE Choreographic Poem Two Records . . . Four Parts LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE Complete \$3.00
90188	ROSSINI —“LA GAZZA LADRA”—OVERTURE Parts I and II PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50

Brunswick Records

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CORRESPONDENCE

Variations On a Familiar Theme

Editor, *Disques*:

Recent correspondence with one of the leading American manufacturers has, in my own mind, crystallized the troubles of the record industry into one word: value.

The implications of this word, I believe, include the field covered by your excellent July editorial on the urgent need (from both musical and practical standpoints) of a long-playing record; they include the need, mentioned by various correspondents, of more equitable record prices; they include other and equally important considerations which I shall endeavor to point out.

When writing this manufacturer, with whose organization I have long enjoyed a most friendly correspondence, I ventured to point out that the average American collector feels rather badly over the appalling amount of "grief" he has had to swallow, even in the past ten years. To illustrate my meaning: in 1921 he had (for that time) a very good collection of celebrity records. Two years later (1923) the policy of double-facing these records was adopted, after strenuous denials that it would ever be done, and thereby a large portion of his collection was outmoded and he was put to considerable extra expense. Two years after (1925) along came electrical recording and outmoded his entire collection and his phonograph as well. Let us assume that, like most collectors, he junked his acoustical collection and his old phonograph and bought the best new 1925 type phonograph and started collecting electrical records. Well, then; by 1929 or 1930, if he wished to get anywhere near full value from his records, he had to junk his 1925 phonograph and buy a new electrical reproducing instrument. Also, if at all fastidious, he has consigned most of his early electrical recordings to the ash can. Now (1931) it seems likely that a long-playing record is shortly to come on the market. That record will outmode at least half our collector's present records: that is, all recorded selections occupying more than one record side.

I mentioned these facts to my correspondent, not by way of complaint, but by way of stating plain facts, in the hope that it would

help him to understand what has put the average collector in his present frame of mind. But my friend the manufacturer replied that his organization is at a loss to understand the great amount of "resentment" on the part of American record buyers, when the same people cheerfully permit themselves to be victimized by the annual model racket into disposing every year of their artificially outmoded automobiles.

To which I replied: there is, it seems to me, no analogy between the phonograph and the automobile. In the first place, there has been no radical change in the automobile in the past ten years; a 1920 automobile, like a 1930 automobile, gave comfortable, efficient service. In the second place, sensible people have never "fallen for" the annual model racket; they have used their cars two, three, and even four years; but, what is more important, after they have had reasonable use of their cars they have turned them in toward new ones and received a reasonable (and substantial) allowance for them. But outmoded phonographs and records are, as everyone knows, to all practical purposes, junk.

This state of affairs *may* be necessary, it *may* be unavoidable; but it certainly produces a tremendous amount of "grief" and leaves a most unpleasant taste in the collector's mouth, while at the same time definitely prejudicing the general public against spending money for phonographs and records.

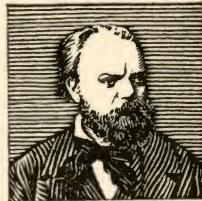
It is not resentment, I said, that the collector feels toward the manufacturers. Rather, it is a combination of surprise, disappointment, and doubt; in short, he feels he has been let down.

Please understand me: I am not arguing against progress in the record industry. On the contrary, I believe that every effort should be made to push on toward theoretical perfection as rapidly as possible. The point I wish to make is, why cannot this be done without putting the burden of the cost of experimentation on our old friend, the ultimate consumer; and particularly, why cannot the industry, now that recording and reproduction have been so nearly perfected, stabilize itself and at least prevent further crops of "grief?" . . .

COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS*

—New Issues—

DVORÁK: QUINTET IN A MAJOR, OP. 81. Dvorák's unrivalled gift of melodic invention has made of this beautiful quintet a thing to be simply listened to and enjoyed without thought of musical form or technique (as music ought to be enjoyed). This is the one and only piano quintet written by the great Czech and dates from some years before Dvorák's sojourn in America where he composed his famous Symphony From the New World and his "American" Quartet. It exhibits the composer in one of his most amiable moods, while at the same time it has its moments of impassioned earnestness. Its animation and extraordinary graces of style communicate themselves to both player and listener. Dvorák's innate simplicity is apparent throughout, for all the impetuous rhythm and passion of the material. The piano part is one of notable brilliance and effectiveness.



Masterworks Set No. 161

Dvorák: Quintet in A Major, Op. 81, for Pianoforte and Strings. Lener String Quartet (Lener, Smilovits, Roth, Hartman) and Olga Loeser-Lebert. Four twelve-inch Records, \$6.00 with Album.



BEETHOVEN: KREUTZER SONATA. A new and intensely brilliant performance of one of the most celebrated of all musical works—the Beethoven "Kreutzer" Sonata. Though dedicated by Beethoven to "his friend R. Kreutzer" it was written for a famous Mulatto violinist, Bridgetower, and first played by the latter from manuscript with Beethoven himself at the piano. Later a quarrel between the two led to the erasure of the original dedication and the substitution of Kreutzer's name. Kreutzer is said never to

have played it. However that may be, the sonata itself is patently one of the great inspirations of music. From first to last it is stimulating, melodious and refreshing, it is filled with life and movement, it is pure, spontaneous creation. The sonata as a musical form is the most abstract of all. Having neither program nor title to indicate its nature or mood, it approximates more closely to "absolute" music than any other form. It is the glory of such works as the Kreutzer Sonata that with these austere limitations they should possess such an endless human appeal.

Masterworks Set No. 160

Beethoven: Sonata in A Major (Kreutzer Sonata) Op. 47, for Violin and Piano. Bronislaw Huberman and Ignaz Friedman. Four twelve-inch Records, \$8.00 with album.



"Magic Notes"

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Viva-tonal Recording—The Records without Scratch

Columbia Phonograph Co., Inc., New York City



"Magic Notes"

Correspondence (*Continued*)

The point of all this is that, even in 1931, phonographs and records are not an investment: they are simply an over-priced luxury, indulged in by a handful of hopeful enthusiasts. It is this fact, as much as anything else, which accounts for their unpopularity with the great number of people of means and discernment who ought to be the backbone of the record industry and the best friends of recorded music.

When I included doubt as one of the elements making up the feeling the collector entertains toward our manufacturers, I meant the disagreeable uncertainty which troubles your correspondent, Mr. Franck, whose splendid letter appears in the August *Disques*, namely: Do those who control the policies of the American manufacturing companies really wish recorded music to succeed in this country? The very cogent reasons for entertaining this doubt are admirably stated in Mr. Franck's letter, and need not be repeated here.

To speak plainly: when the record industry is stabilized; when our manufacturers give compelling evidence of a controlling desire and intention to promote the best interests of recorded music in this country; when a record is produced that will stand up for years of proper usage without developing surface noise or other imperfections; when the long-playing disc record has been introduced at a fair price, and the prices of short-playing records have been reduced to sensible levels; when the owner of a fine reproducing instrument can feel that it will not be outmoded in six months or a year, and that when and if he wishes to change it for a later model he will receive a reasonable and substantial allowance for his present instrument; in short, when the man who puts up the money can feel that he is getting value for it, is in fact making an investment, then the record industry will begin to prosper and to attract to its clientele the men and women of means and intelligence who are its natural patrons. For that is precisely what buying a phonograph and building up a record collection should be—and at present most decidedly is not—an investment, exactly as buying a house or an automobile or building up a library is an investment. Unless and until it becomes just that, there can be no

prosperity in the record industry.

HAROLD C. BRAINERD

Cambridge, Mass.

Repeated Listening

Editor, *Disques*:

In "The Case for Mere Listening" in the May *Disques* I quoted a passage from Sir Henry Hadow which I regarded as strongly illustrative of the value of repeated listening to good music, although Sir William was discussing the repeated poring over of scores to savor the qualities of the music to the full. I should like to add another quotation from the same eminent critic and scholar which may be legitimately employed in further illustration of the same thought. It is from his essay "Music and Musical Criticism" in his "Studies of Modern Music." It reads:

"To appreciate the best music we must hear it often; to hear it often we must live with it: to live with it we must be in the company of those by whom it can be played and sung. At present we are like the guest in Juvenal, waiting, crust in hand, till the more generous viands make their appearance. Our appetite is healthy enough, but we cannot get at the dishes. No doubt the great concerts and festivals have done and are doing incalculable service; but these rare banquets lose part of their efficacy if we only starve at home."

The application is obvious. Through fine records we are enabled to enter at will into the company of those by whom fine music can be adequately played and sung. It is true that we do not come into their physical presence, but this has its advantages similar to those of knowing authors only in their books. "Consider," wrote Emerson, "what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries," etc. "The men themselves," he adds, "were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced in by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age." Surely, with only slight transpositions of meaning, these words of Emerson are ap-

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THESE beautiful compositions that you read of from month to month in the pages of *Disques* are the sort of music you'll never tire of; the music you will be proud to include in your record library . . . Many of them are foreign importations played by such famous organizations as London Symphony and La Scala orchestras as well as the leading American musical organizations . . . All recordings listed —whether by Victor, Columbia, Polydor, Brunswick, etc.—are available at Lyon & Healy's immediately upon release.

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PHILADELPHIA, PA., U.S.A.

Correspondence (*Continued*)

plicable to what records are doing for musical communication.

ADOLPH SCHMUCK
Indianapolis, Ind.

Various Matters

Editor, *Disques*:

Allow me to compliment your magazine upon the fine article by Joseph Cottler on the Quartets of Beethoven. Both in form and content it seems to me one of the finest pieces of writing *Disques* has yet printed. I await the sequel with eager interest.

May I comment upon Mr. Brainerd McKee's defense of Italian opera appearing in the July issue? As a lover of Verdi, Donizetti and Rossini it grieves me to point out that none of these composers succeeded in imparting esthetic unity to the opera until (as in Verdi's case) Wagner had shown them the way. As diminutive musical forms strung together around a narrative and linked up by incongruous stretches of recitative their work, doubtless, proved of interest to an age which regarded art as an afternoon drawing-room affair. Hence the exploitation of the vocalist. Opera, as an art-form, found unification, at last, in Wagner's hands. Here music and drama attained, for the first time, a perfect union and gained a totality of coherence that gave it genuine dignity as an organic art. If Mr. McKee feels too upset over the rude words of Mr. Voigtsberger it may console him to witness the present decline of Wagner. Few puny scribblers exist but what have proved their critical maturity by sneering at his music and even the greater scribes remind recalcitrant enthusiasts that Wagner is not for this century.

A word upon Mr. Goldberg's July article. It is inconceivable that the man who wrote an "Introduction To The Music Of Richard Wagner" and other erudite papers should be serious when he proclaims Paul Rosenfeld "sufficiently the scientist to understand his emotions about art and write of them with a fecundating knowledge." I think all of us pre-War, grey-bearded music-lovers have felt the warm throb of Rosenfeld's prose. We may have all been led astray by him. I was: In the days of the old *Dial* there seemed no one who could write of music like Paul. Then we learned that Prokofieff was angular and dissonant; Debussy, fluorescent; Ornstein,

plangent; that Ravel's music gleamed with the fires of summer moonrise; that Strawinsky was brutally metallic and machine-like and that Varèse built sonorous temples of glass, steel, concrete and gold.

One by one these heroes have drifted from the stage. Mr. Rosenfeld has already made apologies for Strawinsky and Ravel—and cast them off. In their places he now offers us the Seven of *Scribner's* June issue. With due respect to these men (I confess to hearing little enough of their music) the fact that Mr. Rosenfeld presents them weakens their case for me. Because the man is a poet first and a musical specialist second. And a very charming poet, too. His stilted periods and deployment of glittering adjectives first shock and dazzle, then caress the reader's mind. He charms and bemuses and how he writes is infinitely more delightful than what he says. Thus he held the field. A doctor of words. I await his next broadside in *Scribner's* with delicious anticipation.

But this is the man who has flayed the romantic musical idiom (so-called) until no self-respecting composer dare utilize a major triad: This is the man who has explained, howsoever speciously, in terms of mellifluous plausibility why romanticism, preciousness and "moments seeking to prolong themselves" are bad, unhealthy, vulgar and out of place in the twentieth century. This is the fugelman for Gertrude Stein, Gerald Sykes, E. E. Cummings *et al*: And finally, this is the man whose own prose is as richly lambent and voluptuous as the score of *Die Walküre*. It is a strange paradox, indeed, that Paul should be a scourge for the romantics.

As for his scientific attitude: in which of his writings is it displayed? I haven't read everything he has written, admittedly, but nowhere have I encountered a single scientific treatment. Certainly his handling of such items as the music of Varèse is more impressionistic than scientific.

More certainly still, we should all have noticed the decadence of the entire art long before Mr. Rosenfeld commenced his parade of European ineffectuality. When chromaticism disintegrates tonalities and modalities we are on the brink of fallowness. Consider the period from Notker to Josquin or from Byrd to Bach. Men wrestling with stark problems of tonal selection seldom last long enough to consolidate their explorations with

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Correspondence (*Continued*)

works of genius. The exhaustion of tonal resources is bound to be followed by long stretches of exploitation that are apparently barren. This, I imagine, is the secret of our musical sterility more than anything else. And perhaps this is the reason why the only men whose music corresponds to our yesteryear notions of beauty have been pointedly ignored by Mr. Rosenfeld. I refer to Delius, Migot, Falla, Bax, Vaughan-Williams, Holst, Schmitt and, in America, Fabini, Haubiel and Gershwin. These men have given us nothing really new. They are cleaning up the refuse of our old classical tonalities and building pretty cairns with dead men's treasures. Hopeless reactionaries:

Well, I honor the pioneers with all my heart and hear as much of their music as I can. But the above mentioned are the only contemporaries whose music I anticipate listening to with any real gusto because, to me, it still seems more beautiful than anything now being done by the pioneers.

GEOFFREY H. LLOYD

Honolulu, T. H.

Untrue Pitch

Editor, *Disques*:

Untrue pitch is, I believe, the most annoying and least advertised defect of the modern phonograph. Most people can connive at the short-windedness of their phonographs, at the invariability of the interpretation of recorded music and at the inevitable defeat of wax by steel. These things cannot be helped with things as they are. On the other hand, untrue pitch—torture for anyone with even the slightest musical sense—can easily be avoided. Scrupulous care should be taken in the first place to make perfect recordings. Foreign recordings as a whole are much more defective than American ones. . . . Physically defective records, too, are almost commonplace. The idea seems to be that the hole may be bored anywhere within a quarter-inch of the real center. And I shall say that at least half of all the records offered for sale are bent or warped to some extent so that they are hardly worth the raw material they are made of. And finally, of course, the machines themselves are very much at fault. The turn-tables shake and wobble and revolve at an amazingly irregular rate of speed. I have been told by phonograph repair men that there is no such thing as an accurate com-

mercial phonograph. Evidently we ought to be satisfied if the pitch of our recorded music does not transgress the conventional semitone boundaries either side of the apparently imaginary true tone. Unfortunately, however, some people do not enjoy music which is measured out in such a haphazard fashion and with such a thoughtless disregard for the simplest standards of good music. I, for one, would pay twice as much as I am paying now for the privilege of hearing recorded music if I could get something decently well put together which I could listen to without the danger of becoming a nervous wreck by trying mentally to raise or suppress an erring pitch.

CHARLES H. MITCHELL

Chicago, Illinois.

From An English Reader

Editor, *Disques*:

As one who has at heart the gramophone (phonograph) as a means of creating a higher level of appreciation of music, I should like to offer you my sincere congratulations upon the production of such a periodical as *Disques*, a copy of which has been placed in my hands by my friend and customer, Mr. J. F. Broughton Porte, author of the article on Elgar in your issue for April, 1931.

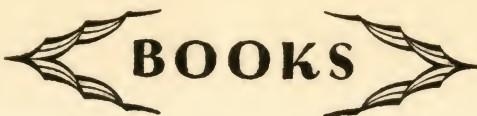
As a maker of high class handmade gramophones (as apart from mass production machines) to the leading musicians and musical critics, I appreciate the fact that there is in America a public keen enough and critical enough to support such a publication as *Disques*.

I admire the style of your periodical, its general tone, and its excellent reviews. Although I have been making and tuning handmade gramophones since I left the army in 1919, I have only had the pleasure of sending one model to America, no doubt on account of the high import duty. . . . The owner, who is now on a visit to England, called here today to tell me how pleased he is with my gramophone. He asked me if I had ever heard of *Disques*, and was delighted when I showed him a copy.

I sincerely trust that *Disques* will enjoy the wide circulation that it obviously deserves—that it will continue to play its part in the fight for all that is best in recorded music.

E. M. GINN

London, England.



BOOKS

MORE MELLOWS. By R. Emmet Kennedy. New York: *Dodd, Mead and Company*. \$4.

This is one of the most entertaining volumes dealing with the Negro spirituals that has yet appeared. Besides a number of examples of spirituals, "ballets," and folk-songs, there is an amusing introduction on "mellows" and the services in which they have so important a part. "A striking development of this musical tendency [of Negroes] is seen today in remote sections of the South where the uneducated Negro spends his simple, quiet life on the plantations and in the peaceful country villages. Church-going being the chief diversion, and song playing so important a part in his devotions, the art of singing is practiced with enthusiastic pride and energy. At such a time and place is born the type of hymn which has come to be known as the 'spiritual,' a religious composition often referred to as a 'mellow,' the Negro word for melody. Unclaimed by its rightful parents, it is dedicated to the glory of proclaiming the Lord's praises and it becomes the property and joy of all. More than anything else the force of monotony, employed with such astonishing skill, is the element which gives the composition the arresting character so intoxicating to the hearer. However childish or meaningless the words of the burden introducing the song, their reiteration seems to gather a peculiar force from the barbaric modulations and seductive rhythm that creep into the melody as the song progresses. With little or no continuity of thought, verse follows verse, as the minds of the chanting worshipers become obsessed by lurid imagery, and the subjects fostered grow until they exert an all-controlling power that is difficult to escape. Singing in chorus, these untaught, exulting voices are capable of introducing harmonizations which would come to a white musician only after long and tedious application . . . The spiritual influence of music manifesting itself in much the same way on all sensitive highly-attuned organisms, there would seem to be but little difference between the feeling of aesthetic elation and mental uplift experienced by these people during their song orgies and the delirious rapture that stirs the musician's soul when he hears a recital of Chopin preludes and

scherzos or a moving symphony of Tchaikovsky or Beethoven."

In order to obtain these spirituals and "ballets" Mr. Kennedy had to approach the singers themselves. This was often very difficult, for to the primitive Negro his religion is a personal matter, and he is very sensitive about it. The thought that it might be lightly treated by white people keeps him constantly suspicious, so that the utmost tact has to be employed in order to gain his confidence. Mr. Kennedy's notes on the songs he has collected here make absorbing reading. A Southerner himself, he has done notable work for the Negro folk-music, and this latest book of his is recommended to all who are interested in the subject. The volume is well gotten up.

ESSAYS ON MUSIC. By Andrew A. Fraser. London: *Humphrey Milford*. 6s.

The author of these essays died recently at the age of twenty-eight. A student of music and music criticism, he reveals wide sympathies and discusses such things as the music of Hindemith and Prokofiev with genuine charm and shrewdness. The author's belief that a good music critic must also be a sound critic of literature and painting is convincingly argued.

CONDUCTING AND ORCHESTRAL ROUTINE. By Frank Estes Kendrie. New York: *The H. W. Gray Company*. \$1.

The literature relating to conducting is as yet rather small. The sudden rise in public esteem of the conductor has brought forth a quantity of articles about this or that maestro's methods, but thus far, apparently, no one has attempted to lay down a definite set of rules that would cover every situation. Mr. Kendrie's volume, well illustrated with diagrams, argues that the conductor's real work is never seen by the audience; it takes place at rehearsal. But not many conductors, at least in America, seem to agree with this, as attending a few concerts given by our leading symphony orchestras will quickly prove.

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